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# The Feminisation of Agentives in French- and Spanish- Speaking Countries: a Cross-linguistic and Cross- continental Comparison.

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2015  
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PhD

## Abstract

Non-sexist writing guidelines have been produced since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but often cause controversy. Taking only one aspect of such language reform, the feminisation of agentives, the present study aims to compare two similarly-structured, grammatically-gendered languages, French and Spanish, with regard to the visibility of women in the print media.

After reviewing research that shows the use of masculine gendered agentives can induce, or reinforce, stereotypes which obscure female agency, prior studies of feminisation are classified by methodology and data source showing that little previous research has taken advantage of corpus techniques to analyse naturally occurring data, nor is there a significant body of contrastive research comparing feminisation strategies across languages or across countries with the same language. The collation of a cross-continental and cross-language corpus of media references to named people is therefore proposed and executed to allow both quantitative and qualitative analysis of naturally-occurring feminisations (or, indeed, their absence).

Using electronic techniques, a corpus of over 5,000 references to named individuals was collated from press websites in France, Spain, Canada and Argentina. The form of the agentives referring to women was compared to strategies suggested in the UN-produced guidelines on gender neutral language, for French and Spanish, and discrepancies were classified. Classification of the agentives' morphology was also made, to assign a 'predicted' base gender to each agentive. Quantitative and qualitative analyses performed on the data then drive the discussion of similarities and differences in feminisation strategies, across the chosen languages and countries.

## Abstract

The study shows that prestige agentives cause feminisation difficulties across both languages, independently of morphology, whilst also identifying issues that are specific to one language group or one area. Possible reasons for both the similarities and differences are suggested and in turn suggest areas for further research using similar, corpus-based techniques.

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

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## 1. Chapter 1: Introduction

*Les récentes déclarations de trois académiciens (dont une académicienne) prétendent dissocier la personne de la fonction et affirment que l'emploi de « la ministre » met la langue française en péril.*  
(Rey-Debove 1998:256 ff259)

[The recent declarations by three academicians (of whom one was a woman) intend to dissociate the person from the function and affirm that the use of 'the (f) minister' puts the French language in peril]

In recent years, many international and governmental organisations have felt the need to draw up guidelines on 'gender inclusive' language<sup>1</sup>. These have frequently met with ridicule from sections of the media<sup>2</sup> as well as causing linguistic controversy in countries such as France, where the purity of the language is in the hands of a national academy<sup>3</sup>.

Whilst each country will have its own stereotypes, prejudices and preferences in regard to gender politics, grammatical gender seems, at first sight, to be an immutable fact about language – at least, this is what the *académiciens* would like us to believe. In certain countries, therefore, the idea of 'gender inclusive language' causes not only political debate but also academic debate. In the midst of this latter debate, however, it is possible that the underlying problem of gender equality is being ignored completely, moving the arguments away from

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<sup>1</sup> See Desprez-Bouanchaud, Doolaeghe, and Ruprecht (1999), and Valenciano Martínez-Orozco (2003), amongst others.

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1162384/EU-bans-use-Miss-Mrs-sportsmen-statesmen-claims-sexist.html> consulted 25<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

<sup>3</sup> See Rey-Debove (1998).

practical issues to do with, for example, attracting girls into the sciences and instead polarising public opinion and stigmatising ‘political correctness’ as a kind of impoverished dialect of the national language, like the *Newspeak* of Orwell’s *1984* (Orwell 2004).

This study intends to explore the current linguistic position of women in French and Spanish, as reflected in the media. At a time when women in French- and Spanish-speaking countries are at last taking up high-profile political posts (a female president in Argentina; a female justice minister in France) it will review the grammatical context of references to women found in the press in order to measure both the success and the relevance of the feminisation strategies proposed by non-sexist guidelines.

A significant aim of many guidelines for non-sexist writing is to ensure the inclusion and visibility of women in the public sphere. This ranges from wording official documents and legislation to encompass the female sex (for example, eliminating the potential for a single-sex interpretation of the ‘rights of man’ by replacing the phrase with ‘human rights’) to more personal aspects of naming and reference so that women holding positions previously reserved for men are not presented as male: for example, in English titles such as ‘chairman’. In languages with two grammatical genders, traditionally labelled *masculine* and *feminine*, the aim for visibility can be complicated by prescriptive rules whereby nouns classified as *masculine* require masculine agreement for accompanying adjectives and determiners: hence, if a woman is the holder of a post labelled by a masculine noun there may be no feminine agreement in a section of prose which describes her actions, prompting the reader to think that her role is indeed being performed by a man.

A decade after the UN itself published guidelines on inclusive language<sup>4</sup>, this study will consider the extent to which the public visibility of women, as reflected in press reports, has been influenced by this initiative. The initial questions to be addressed therefore concern how such feminisation is implemented in the media, specifically:

- to what extent have morphological feminisation strategies been adopted in news articles?
- are there specific roles, or job titles, which show consistent resistance to feminisation?
- are there specific morphological forms for which feminisation is not practised?
- does the grammatical practice of masculine agreement (specifically, for determiners) still persist when the underlying referent is a woman?

In order to explore these questions in depth, the study is not restricted to a single language but compares two Romance languages with similar systems of binary grammatical gender: French and Spanish. Additionally, as both of these languages are spoken in their countries of origin and in their American ex-colonies, it is possible to compare regional variations of the languages between the old and new worlds.

By looking at published texts from national news organisations, the way women are referred to as agents (via *agentives*) in French and Spanish, both in Europe

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<sup>4</sup> The UN Guidelines were compiled by Desprez-Bouanchaud et al. (1999) for French and Paoli (1999) for Spanish.

and the Americas, will be analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The lexical items used as agentives for named women, with their contextually associated determiners, will be considered in two contexts: firstly, against published, non-sexist guideline recommendations for feminisation and, secondly, in regard to the underlying, base word form, to quantify how strongly 'masculine' or 'feminine' the morphology appears to be when considered independently of semantics. With information on these two aspects of grammatical feminisation, it will be possible to compare actual feminisations against the guidelines' recommendations, not only in a binary manner, reflecting conformity, but also allow the guidelines themselves to be analysed with regard to whether their proposed morphological feminisations follow pre-existing patterns of feminisation, particularly where a variety of feminisation strategies are available for the base word-form.

To that end, the thesis is structured as described below.

## **1.1. Thesis outline**

This thesis consists of seven chapters. In Chapter 2, a review of previous literature in the area of grammatical feminisation will be undertaken, describing its nature and purpose. The desire to improve women's visibility will be discussed in the context of studies on gender stereotyping, many of them from the area of psychology rather than linguistics. It will then discuss how the French and Spanish languages have been analysed in previous studies looking at feminisation, both qualitatively and quantitatively, highlighting how few cross-language studies are available. Finally, the principal works used within the current study will be introduced and discussed in the context of its objectives.



Chapter 3 will describe the tools used in the study, the majority of them being internet-based. The corpus collation will be elaborated and subsequent data cleansing explained, along with the storage and retrieval methods used to manage the resulting corpus.

The quantitative analysis performed on the corpus is described in Chapter 4. An overview and literature review of the statistical procedure used is given followed by graphical representations of the results when applied to the corpus. Finally in Chapter 4, a summary and discussion of the results is given.

The next chapter discusses the qualitative analysis of the corpus data. In particular, Chapter 5 compares the feminisation 'anomalies' across the two languages under study to show similarities and differences via language- and country-specific comparisons. Chapter 6 then considers how the issues identified in Chapters 4 and 5 are addressed by non-sexist guideline compilers and their critics, providing a data-driven view of issues that have previously been discussed only theoretically. The findings are then summarised in the final chapter of the thesis, which also suggests avenues for future study.

In working with mixed methods on a dynamically-created corpus of actual agentive feminisations, it is hoped that this study can bring objectivity back to a debate about language that has suffered from the political polarisation between feminist language reformers and conservative language guardians. As language and identity are so closely associated, it is only natural that debates on language change will become emotionally charged, hence the need to ensure real data is available as input to such discussions.

## **2. Chapter 2. The Visibility of Women in the Print Media**

Historically speaking, we can see the following three trends. First, terms that refer to women gain more negative senses over time. Second, male terms either retain their original meaning or become more positive. Third, terms that were originally generic (such as girl) or neutral, such as tart or biddy, gain more negative connotations when they are specialized to refer to females only (Romaine 1999:94).

### **2.1. Introduction**

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century began with women campaigning for the vote and, by its close, women in Western democracies had achieved greater legal rights than for centuries beforehand, enshrining their equality with men in both the public and private spheres. The century witnessed female politicians rising to positions of power across the world: Golda Meir in Israel; Indira Gandhi in India; Margaret Thatcher in Britain and (briefly) Edith Cresson in France. By moving into roles previously only open to men, these pioneering women frequently exposed, by their mere presence, naming practices that struggled to keep pace with the prestige of their positions. In the latter half of the century, debates began in several countries on how to resolve issues related to the naming of women who were performing roles previously reserved for men. As part of this debate, asymmetrical and gendered naming practices began to attract research interest in a variety of different countries and languages. As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century progresses, little appears to have been resolved in either the academic or the public sphere regarding good naming practice. This study will take stock of the current situation regarding naming practices, as at the start of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Taking the grammatically gendered languages of French and Spanish, it will look at the nouns used to identify roles occupied by

named women in press reports, particularly focussing on the use of morphological noun feminisation.

In this chapter, the parameters of the study will be outlined in the context of previous research on grammatical gender, sex and sexism.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. In Section 2, firstly, studies investigating gender stereotyping in a variety of languages will show that traditional usages can obscure women's agency, making their presence less obvious to the reader; in Section 2.2, the concepts of developing 'non-sexist language' will be described with reference to major works in English, Spanish and French. In Section 2.3, studies that have previously researched the linguistic manifestation of female agency in French and Spanish will be reviewed: firstly, theoretical studies analysing, for example, dictionary compilation will be discussed, in Section 2.3.1, after which, in Section 2.3.2, corpus studies capturing actual usage will be presented. In Section 2.3.3, a description will be presented of how these previous works inform the current study. Finally, in Section 2.4, the principal works to be used as a basis for the analyses undertaken in the current study will be described and discussed, showing why particular papers were selected and showing their relevance to the subject at hand.

Section 2.2, below, will begin by presenting research on gender stereotyping and this will lead into the discussions and debates of how to improve the visibility of female agency, across languages and countries.

## **2.2. Women as agents: stereotyping and visibility**

As was mentioned above, the legal position of women changed significantly during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and one aspect of this concerned equality of opportunity

in the job market. As legislation came into effect requiring advertised employment roles to be available to women as well as men, research was often directed specifically towards the job titles used in such advertisements.

The research presented in this section looks at attitudes to named job roles, where stereotyping may colour the audience perception of apparently sex-neutral information. The studies presented here are not restricted to the two languages, French and Spanish, which form the topic of the current study, but span language groups with two, three or (ostensibly) no grammatical gender, showing that the problems discussed are not restricted to a single language pattern.

### **2.2.1. Studies of sex-stereotyping**

Much of the early research done on the subject of gender stereotypes was carried out in English and moved into other languages with reference to the Anglo-Saxon experience. This section will review work on stereotypes and the visibility of female agency, which began in the early 1970s and concentrated on the roles available in job advertisements.

#### **2.2.1.1. Studies of English-speaking communities**

Bem and Bem (1973) conducted an early, practical exploration of the impact language choices could have on the behaviour of job seekers by presenting 20 subjects with fictitious job advertisements for positions in a telecommunications company. These fell into one of three categories: sex-biased (e.g. with exclusively male or female subject pronouns); unbiased (e.g. with neutral wording or explicitly stating 'male or female') and stereotypically reversed (e.g. seeking female engineers or male telephonists). Table 1, below, represents the

percentage of positive responses to the advertisements they received from male and female subjects, respectively:

Advertisement type / Subject	Men	Women
Sex biased	30	5
Unbiased	75	25
Reversed	65	45

Table 1: Positive responses to job advertisement wordings, by gender (reproduced from information in Bem & Bem 1973:13)

This table suggests that sex-biased job advertising is unlikely to attract candidates of the opposite gender from that worded in the advertisement, whereas unbiased and reversed-stereotype advertising attracts more candidates. The researchers conclude:

We therefore suspect that most men and women never even both[er (sic)] to read, let alone seriously consider, ‘opposite-sex’ advertisements. (Bem & Bem 1973:16)

Bem and Bem’s study explicitly eliminated stereotypical gender assumptions by including the ‘reversed gender’ version of the job advertisement. However, stereotypical gender may be inherent in people’s understanding of the job title itself – as the riddle/joke about a surgeon being unable to operate on *her* son testifies<sup>5</sup>. Other research has attempted to separate out gender stereotyping

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<sup>5</sup> The riddle is presented as follows: a man and his son are travelling in a car together when the car is involved in an accident and the father is killed. The son is taken to hospital but the surgeon pronounces: ‘I can’t operate on this boy, he’s my son’ – what relation is the surgeon to the boy?

She is his mother, but most people hearing this for the first time will take a long time to come up with any answer at all. In the film *Tin Cup* (1996, directed by Ron Sheldon) this riddle is told by

and vocabulary, to gauge the discrete effects of each of these features on test subjects. Such works include that by McConnell and Fazio (1996) studying attitudes to the English role of committee 'chair' where the choice of job title (chair/-man/-woman/-person) was found to project personality traits onto the holder: by choosing 'chairperson', for example, the holder was perceived as more feminine than masculine. Similar research on children was performed by Liben, Bigler and Krogh (2002) and showed significant age-related effects on the perception of which sex could perform English roles of the form '-man', such as 'postman'. The researchers note that this could simply illustrate a lack of real-world experience on the part of the children, who encounter so few professional roles in their daily lives.

In the 1990s, this type of research began to be conducted in languages other than English, and some interesting cross-linguistic studies were carried out by researchers, as will now be shown.

### **2.2.1.2. Comparative studies**

Moving on from single-language research, Carreiras, Garnham, Oakhill and Cain (1996) compared English and Spanish priming and grammatical gender in a psycholinguistic study using reading response times.

In this study, subjects were given anaphorical references to unnamed agents where the agentive might have stereotypical gender (e.g. 'footballer'). In English, the gendered anaphor (e.g. 'she') occurred in the second of a pair of sentences whilst in Spanish, grammatical gender was present in the determiner paired with the agentive in the first sentence. For examples which went against

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the lead character, played by Kevin Costner, just as his next golf pupil, 'Dr Griswold' (Rene Russo) arrives, at which point he admits he was expecting the doctor to be a man.

gender stereotypes, the researchers found that the English subjects took longer to read the second sentence whilst the Spanish subjects took longer to read the first sentence. They postulate that this reflects the processing time required to assimilate information into the mental picture of characters described in the narrative, which is against stereotype in sentence 2 of the English data but in sentence 1 of the Spanish data. They conclude that this mental character image is updated only as new information arrives, with earlier assumptions being reviewed and dismissed if they prove false but also show that stereotyping is an issue even in an apparently ungendered language such as English.

The view that English, lacking grammatical genders, thus displays a more neutral approach to job titles has apparently prompted some Northern European countries (those who have very high proportions of second-language English speakers) to avoid the problem of grammatical gender in job advertisements by using English as the advertising medium. A study by Van Meurs, Korzilius, Planken and Fairley (2007) looked at this practice in the Dutch press and found that, although applicants thought the English job titles were more appealing, suggesting higher pay and a more 'international' working environment, they were actually considered to be more 'masculine' than their (grammatically gendered) Dutch equivalents by three fifths of the subjects (Van Meurs et al. 2007:200). Earlier research with German students (Ulrich, Eberhard, & Krewerth 2004)<sup>6</sup> had suggested to the Dutch team that English titles would be more gender-neutral than their Dutch equivalents.

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<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.bibb.de/de/16366.htm>, accessed 26<sup>th</sup> January 2014 (referenced in Van Meurs et al. (2007) as <http://www.bibb.de/de/privat/16366.htm>, which was not found).

Researchers have also studied the effects of language policy on sexual gender assumptions in Norway, where a deliberate strategy of grammatical gender neutralisation abandoned the feminine form completely. In their study, Gabriel and Gygax (2008) concluded that the use of the masculine grammatical gender has had the effect of strengthening stereotypically 'masculine' responses instead of creating neutralisation. By performing equivalent experiments to those of Carreiras et al. (1996) they showed that gender-neutral sentences (that is, neutral according to the official language policy) were perceived as referring to male protagonists.

Similar studies have been performed by Gygax, Gabriel, Sarrasin, Oakhill and Garnham (2008) comparing multiple European languages with differing (or absent) gendered-language policies which showed that where grammatically masculine gender was used for a group, regardless of the societal stereotype involved, the group members would be considered more likely to be male than female. In more recent papers, researchers including Gygax and Sarrasin (e.g. Gygax et al. 2008) have begun to look explicitly at attitudes to non-sexist language in countries at various stages of language policy implementation – from those having no policy to those with well-established ones.

This important line of research shows that gender stereotypes are reinforced by using masculine gender for agentives in grammatical systems that include a feminine gender. It is this issue that underlies the desire, of many different promoters of sexual equality, to make female agency visible. This desire is illustrated in many of the guidelines on non-sexist writing available in countries with grammatically gendered languages. In the next section, works reviewing the options for female visibility in grammatically gendered languages will be discussed, showing some of the issues which arise.



### 2.2.2. Making women visible in gendered languages

An early example of research into Spanish agentives was performed by Nash (1982) on job advertisements in the Puerto Rican press. She classified the available approaches to new legislation on equality of opportunity, as exemplified in newspaper-advertised vacancies. She notes four main patterns for female inclusion in this variety of Spanish:

1. Agentive doubling, where the occupational noun is given in both masculine and feminine forms (e.g. *maestro/a* [teacher]: 84). She notes, however, that the order of the grammatical genders can be used by the advertiser to express a subtle sex preference, with stereotypically female roles having the feminine agentive listed first and *vice versa*.
2. Adjective doubling, where the occupational noun is of a word form that is invariant but the related adjectives are still doubled (e.g. for words ending – *ista*: 87)
3. Neutralisation, where the agentive is avoided and reformulation of the role is given using patterns such as *persona con experiencia en* [person experienced in...] (87)
4. Explicit mention of both sexes (e.g. *hombre o mujer* [man or woman]) allied to the agentive, which she notes is particularly common for roles with a strong sex stereotype (e.g. *estilista* [hairdresser]) though redundant as the agentive is grammatically neutral (epicene, or variably-gendered) (88)
5. Job title given in English, not Spanish (89)

The final option has been previously mentioned in the context of Dutch, and avoids the question of grammatical gender by changing to a language which does not appear to possess it. The four Spanish language options, however,

reflect the available range for female inclusion in a language with only two grammatical genders. These options are repeated in published guidelines for both French and Spanish gender-inclusive language, though some are obviously only applicable where the agentive is being used generically rather than in reference to a single person. The remainder of this section will discuss these options in the light of proposals for French and Spanish language reform.

### **2.2.2.1. The Anglo-Saxon world**

The English-speaking world has produced a wealth of debate on the issue of naming female agents, starting as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when the suffix *-ess* was commonly used to distinguish a woman entering a previously male profession and was generally considered complimentary (Miller & Swift 1989:136). By the 1930s, Meredith (1930) was apparently able to comment that the practice of using this suffix fell into disuse as the novelty of female agency diminished: this suggests that, once women were accepted in the new roles, the sex of the incumbent no longer mattered. Reverting to the base term also preserves the status of the role, as agentives referring solely to women often become depreicative (see Romaine 1999:94). Pauwels (1998) notes that the suffixes used in the previous century to denote female agency, such as *-ess* or *-ette*, were also common diminutives and hence could be seen to trivialise the woman's contribution to her chosen profession (Pauwels 1998:32). She notes, however, that although it is now common to see gender neutral agentives in job advertisements '[...] the use of similar terms (especially *-person* compounds) is not very widespread in the mass media (e.g. newspapers)' (Pauwels 1998:216) and further suggests that the media is often a contributing factor in the spread of new or otherwise different linguistic forms (see also Cameron (1995) for a discussion of the role of the media in language change).

Gibbon (1999:150) states that whilst English naturally accommodates gender neutralisation, in grammatically gendered languages, such as French and German, language campaigners argue that feminisation is more natural. Becquer, Cholewka, Coutier and Mathieu (1999:6-7) note, however, that a new agentive formed by feminising the pre-existing dictionary version will suffer both from being a neologism and from potential pejoration of the feminine in relation to the masculine, a theme that will be re-examined later in this study, particularly in Chapter 6. The issue of grammatical gender will now be explored for Spanish and French, respectively.

### **2.2.2.2. The Spanish-speaking world**

Turning to Spanish, an often cited example of the issue of gendered job titles concerns the entry of men into the fashion world at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the invention of the masculinised word *modisto* to distinguish them from the traditional role of a seamstress or dressmaker: *modista*. The two terms then became independent with *modisto* continuing to mean a ‘fashion designer’, of either sex, with *modista* designating a lower-status role of someone merely making up existing designs<sup>7</sup>. This is an unusual example where initial grammatical hypercharacterisation of the masculine later became a variably-gendered agentive.

This serves to highlight two issues: firstly, that binary-gendered languages which use the gender labels ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ tend to have

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Hampares, (1976); Nissen, (1986) and Bengoechea, Centenera, González and Simón, (2009) for discussions of this particular example of masculinisation, the irony of which being that *-ista* is a very common ending for Spanish professional titles and is considered variably-gendered

morphological, as well as semantic, patterning to the gender-division of words; in Spanish it is common to feminise by changing a final -o to -a or by adding -a to the final consonant. Hence, a parallel masculinisation strategy has been devised here to turn a superficially 'feminine' word form into its masculine equivalent. Secondly, it shows once again that a word associated with women as protagonists is at a disadvantage in terms of prestige. Bengoechea et al. (2009) cite further professions (e.g. *personal de enfermería* ['nursing staff' instead of 'nurse'], *auxiliar de vuelo* ['flight auxiliaries' instead of 'air host']: 45) showing that pre-existing feminine terms are unacceptable to men entering a stereotypically female profession and argue that women entering previously male professions should be similarly recognised and recognisable. However, they also suggest that repeated use is removing the stigma from the feminine and that:

*los pares mujer pública/hombre público casi se han convertido en auténticamente simétricos* [the pairs 'public woman'/'public man' have almost become symmetrical] (Bengoechea et al. 2009:117)

though without suggesting the direction in which this symmetry has travelled: i.e., whether 'public man' is now the same as 'rent boy' or 'public woman' a pillar of society<sup>8</sup>. The point being highlighted by this example of language change is that as terms gain in usage and familiarity they cease to attract notice or controversy.

Peninsular Spanish is guarded by the *Real Academia Española* [RAE], founded in 1713 and inspired by the French equivalent, founded nearly a century

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<sup>8</sup> See also the Malaga University guidelines for administrative language (Medina Guerra, Ayala Castro, & Guerrero Salazar 2002) which discusses the term '*mujer pública*' on page 61.

earlier<sup>9</sup>. The RAE itself inspired similar organisations in Hispanic America, starting as early as 1872 in Colombia<sup>10</sup>. It has been producing dictionaries and reference grammars since the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and, like its French equivalent, these propound a prescriptive, rather than descriptive, annotation of the language. Unlike the British English experience, where the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) seeks to historically document the language, concentrating on a chronology of citations for its entries that show how meaning has evolved<sup>11</sup>, the Spanish Academy's dictionary [DRAE] aspires to authoritatively document 'correct' Spanish and boasts of removing citations from its pages in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>12</sup>. Although both models of dictionary compilation must ultimately incorporate neologisms, ideological criteria, theoretically absent from the OED, are central to the compilation of the DRAE and researchers have specifically compared its differing editions to show how feminisation has been treated (Calero Fernández 2004c).

The protection of a national language by a specially designated Academy, possibly more than the fact of grammatical gender itself, is a major difference between the English language and the languages of France and Spain.

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<sup>9</sup> See <http://www.rae.es/la-institucion/historia/origenes> consulted 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014 and <http://www.colombiaaprende.edu.co/html/home/1592/article-130142.html>, consulted 21<sup>st</sup> December 2014.

<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.rae.es/la-institucion/politica-linguistica-panhispanica/cronologia>, consulted 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014.

<sup>11</sup> See <http://public.oed.com/about/>, consulted 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014.

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.rae.es/obras-academicas/diccionarios/diccionario-de-la-lengua-espanola>, consulted 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014.

France's 'revolutionary' national character, where the entry of women into high political positions occurred while Spain was yet to become a democracy, perhaps allowed the debate on grammatical feminisation to start earlier in France than it did in Spain<sup>13</sup>. The French debate was also influenced by French-speaking populations outside France, and hence with less inclination to be ruled by the *Académie Française*.

### **2.2.2.3. The French-speaking world**

Although French shares the same issue of grammatical gender with Spanish, French-speaking countries came into the feminisation debate with very different historical influences. France has a tradition of feminism similar to that of the Anglo-Saxon world, with the 1960s and 1970s marking radical changes in both cultures. By contrast, in Spain the position of women took steps backwards after the Civil War and only after the death of Franco in 1976 were women again treated as full citizens<sup>14</sup>.

Women gained the vote in France after the Second World War, and only a few years later Simone de Beauvoir published her *Le Deuxième Sexe* [The Second Sex] (de Beauvoir [1949] 1964) analysing the position of women in French society. However, it was not until the 1980s that the real debate about language

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<sup>13</sup> For example, the Spanish *Instituto de la Mujer* was formed in 1983 and set up a language division, *NOMBRA*, in 1994, publishing its first official guidelines to non-sexist language in 1996 (Lledo Cunill 2006:7). The French *Commission Roudy* was set up, and published French guidelines, 10 years before the Spanish document appeared (see Dawes 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Women gained the vote in Spain in 1931 but after 1938 their labour activities outside the marital home were curtailed by legislation: see, for example, Ortiz Heras (2006). See also footnote 43 in Chapter 5.

and gender began in France. In 1983, a commission was created by the French government with the remit to propose feminisations for roles previously held exclusively by men (see, for example, Fleischman 1997, for a discussion of its basis and composition). The report they produced was published in 1986, and was strongly criticised by the *Académie Française* for 'misunderstanding' grammatical gender as soon as it appeared (see Baider, Khaznadar & Moreau 2007 for a discussion). In Canada, the first set of feminisation guidelines appeared in 1979 whilst in Belgium and Switzerland it was not until the early 1990s that such documents were published (Dawes 2003:197). In terms of guideline creation, it is clear that Canada was the trailblazer with early publication influencing dictionary production within the country. The Canadian variety of French is often described as being more open to grammatical feminisation<sup>15</sup>, though this is possibly an artefact of dictionary-based research, as will be discussed further in the next section. Several possible justifications for this Canadian pioneering have been proposed, mainly touching on the local proximity and influence of an English-speaking population (see, for example, Elmiger 2000:216, who argues similarly for Belgium and Switzerland in regard to Germanic language contact).

Klinkenberg (2006) speaks of French resistance to feminisation not only institutionally but also from women themselves, speculating that the prestige of their new position – as judges or ministers, for example – breeds a concern for devaluing the office by changing its title. He attributes this to both linguistic and social insecurity (Klinkenberg 2006: 23). Van Compernelle (2008, 2009) notes a reliance on dictionary attestations amongst students which prompts a resistance

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<sup>15</sup> For example, by Fujimura (2005)

to feminisation as the dictionaries themselves are produced by conservative organisations, antagonistic towards language change.

It appears then, that agentive feminisation is problematic in both French and Spanish, and that despite the publication of official guidelines there is strong resistance to change. In the next section, previous research attempting to assess the degree and type of change will be presented and the methods used will be discussed and evaluated.

### **2.3. Assessing the success of feminisation strategies**

In this section, previous research assessing if and how agentives have been feminised in French and Spanish will be discussed. There are two broad areas of study to consider: firstly, those analysing dictionaries, working either on the inclusion of feminised lexical entries or on stereotyping in the example sentences. Secondly, there are studies which collate naturally occurring language and analyse how women are presented and named within a corpus. Of these latter studies, some use quantitative tools and corpus-based methods while others are qualitative and use methods allied to discourse analysis.

#### **2.3.1. Dictionary-based work**

During the 1970s a wave of educational research into gender equality prompted numerous studies of how females were presented in textbooks – infant reading schemes were a particularly rich area for such critiques<sup>16</sup>. Dictionary example sentences, where these were created by the lexicographers rather than pure citations, also began to be studied by educational researchers, who were

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<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Graebner (1972) and Taylor (1973) for an early example in American English.



interested in whether and how female characters were represented<sup>17</sup>. Educational studies from this era were concerned with how male-dominated examples might direct girls towards or against associating their sex with certain activities or profession – such as prejudicing them against science subjects. Research on dictionary examples in French was active by the 1980s with, for example, Martin-Berthet (1981) studying sexualised terms.<sup>18</sup> However, this kind of research is related specifically to gender stereotypes rather than feminisations. In contrast, this section will give consideration to dictionary studies that look at feminisation (or its absence) in French and Spanish lexicography.

In order to illustrate the general nature of such critiques of lexicography, a single study from French and one from Spanish will be discussed in the context of local dictionary compilation issues. The subsequent discussion will show why this type of research is quite limited in its ability to show language change at work in society.

### **2.3.1.1. French in Europe**

Baider et al. (2007) review the multilingual language resource *EuroWordNet*<sup>19</sup>, created by a consortium of Universities based in the EU and covering both the French and Spanish languages, amongst others. In the manner of a thesaurus, the word net associates meanings together, and the researchers here begin

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<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Gershuny (1975).

<sup>18</sup> See Baider et al (2007) for a more detailed review of dictionary research of this type in the French language.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ilc.uva.nl/EuroWordNet/> consulted 9<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

from the French definitions of *homme* [man] and *femme* [woman] noting that 'man' is still synonymous with 'human' in the *EuroWordNet* database for French<sup>20</sup>. In contrast, the principal definition of 'woman' concerns reproduction<sup>21</sup>, thus following the documented trend for vocabulary related to females to become sexualised (for an analysis of this, see Guiraud 1978 for French; Stanley 1977 for English). In the section of their study on job-titles, the researchers detect consistent stereotyping, noting, for example, that 'prostitute' and 'nurse' only appear in the feminine (Baider, Jacquy & Liang 2007:66). Their study does not, however, look at feminisations in a holistic sense, and only refers to the feminine in this narrow context.

Turning to Spanish, however, a more extensive dictionary study was carried out on the Spanish Academy's official dictionary [DRAE], touching on differences between recent editions pertinent to the discussion of linguistic sexism.

### **2.3.1.2. Evolution of the Spanish Academy's dictionary**

A comprehensive study of differences affecting female representation between the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> editions of the Spanish Academy's dictionary was undertaken in a volume edited by Lledó Cunill, Calero Fernandez and Forgas Berdet in 2004. In a rich study, aspects as diverse as the 'treatment of prostitution'

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<sup>20</sup> Definition 7 of *homme* is cited as: «*être vivant de l'espèce humaine*» [living being of the human species] and definition 3 as containing the comment: «*l'usage générique du mot faisant référence à tout être humain*» [the generic usage of the word refers to all of the human race]. (Baider, Jacquy, et al. 2007:63-64)

<sup>21</sup> For *femme* the definition phrase «*pouvoir avoir des enfants*» [able to have children] is cited (Baider, Jacquy, et al. 2007:63-64).

(Calero Fernández) and 'feminine representation in etymology' (Forgas Berdet) are studied in reference to the (then) latest edition of the *DRAE*. In terms of the research strands previously mentioned, the following chapters explore these in a Spanish context: *Los Ejemplos* [Examples] (Lledó Cunill) discusses how women are represented in example phrases and sentences; *El léxico de los oficios, profesiones, cargos y tratamientos* [The lexicon of trades, professions, positions and treatments] (Calero Fernández) looks at not only job titles but other agentives which may be subject to feminisation. Specific chapters review what has changed with regard to female visibility (*Presencia femenina suprimida, modificada (respecto a la edición de 1992 del diccionario) o nueva* [Female presence removed, modified (with respect to the 1992 edition of the dictionary) or new], (Calero Fernández) or stayed the same (*Análisis de las definiciones de ámbito femenino que no han variado en el DRAE de 2001* [Analysis of definitions in the female arena which have not changed in the DRAE 2001 edition], (Forgas Berdet).

This work touches directly on how feminisations are being developed within the dictionary, so it is close to the subject of the current study in the simple context of morphological feminisation. However, as has previously been discussed, the language Academies of France and Spain promote a prescriptive view of grammar and vocabulary, arguing strongly for standardisation, and hence their dictionaries reflect their conservatism. Whilst this makes them interesting and useful topics of research study, their entries do not necessarily reflect natural language, though they will obviously influence what is considered 'correct usage'.

The isolated study of dictionaries is therefore misleading when gauging the extent to which female agency is being recognised, in the same way that

counting the number published guidelines available is a misleading metric on language change. In both cases, the research is studying meta-language rather than actual usage. For this reason, the current study is based on natural language examples taken from the media, and the next section will review research that has looked at feminisation in natural language in both French and Spanish.

### **2.3.2. Natural language studies**

The current study will be based on a corpus of media references to women. In this section, the choice of this method will be positioned against differing data collection and sampling methods as found in previous studies.

#### **2.3.2.1. Non-corpus studies**

Various researchers have produced studies on aspects of feminisation that review developments within one area of discourse. In French, several studies addressing the naming of women in the press were carried out by Brick and Wilks (1994, 2002; Wilks & Brick 1997).

In 1994, when Edith Cresson was briefly French prime minister, Brick and Wilks (1994; Wilks & Brick 1997) looked specifically at her treatment in the major French newspapers. In a qualitative study, they discovered a reluctance to feminise 'prime minister' even in publications which were comfortable feminising 'minister': indeed, as late as 2012, *L'Express* continued this trend, describing Edith Cresson in the masculine as '*l'ancien Premier Ministre*' [the (m) ex-Prime Minister (m)]<sup>22</sup> in one issue while happily describing Yamina Benguigui as '*la*

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<sup>22</sup> *L'Express*, international edition, 16<sup>th</sup> May 2012 page 15.

*nouvelle ministre*' [the (f) new (f) minister]<sup>23</sup> in the feminine a few days later. This latter usage is, at least, some sign of progress given that in 1998 there was still debate regarding feminising the determiner associated with the word 'minister' though there is no obvious reason why the word form itself would not be variably-gendered, as argued by Rey-Debove (1998).

Brick and Wilks (1994) looked holistically at how Cresson was treated in the press, considering how she was named (predominantly as *Mme* [Mrs]) in comparison to previous male incumbents as well as whether her title was feminised. A few years later, they interviewed French newspaper editors regarding their approach to feminisation (1997) and found there was still great reluctance to innovate in relation to the visibility of female agency. A telling quotation from one of the editors acknowledges that only terms '*déjà entrés en vigueur*' ['already in use'] (Wilks & Brick 1997:301) were considered acceptable for feminisation, a tacit admission of maintaining the *status quo*.

In 2002, the same authors (Brick & Wilks) reviewed the publications of various political parties to assess their use of feminisations. In this study they produce some quantitative data but the main import of the research is still qualitative, with the authors concluding that the party policy on feminisation and equality is not always visible in their publications, which, they note, will have been written collectively or by multiple authors giving problems of control over editorial policy. The topic of feminisation in political parties will be revisited when considering corpus studies in the next section.

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<sup>23</sup>[http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/indiscrets/la-nouvelle-ministre-yamina-benguigui-fait-des-jaloux-a-paris\\_1118656.html](http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/indiscrets/la-nouvelle-ministre-yamina-benguigui-fait-des-jaloux-a-paris_1118656.html), consulted 29<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

Turning to Spanish, Bengoechea has produced several reviews of the Spanish press, though spanning relatively short time-periods (one week, for example, in Bengoechea 2003, 2006a); only a few of these studies are looking explicitly at feminisation. Her approach is one which is more aligned to discourse analysis, with a particular interest in how female agency is portrayed (e.g. 2006b) and how female visibility is maintained in plurals (e.g. 2006a) topics which are both distinct from the issues of feminisation analysed in the present study.

Bengoechea et al. (2009) reviewed how policies of linguistic inclusion had impacted various institutions and concluded that feminisation of agentives was well advanced in the Spanish press, despite a reluctance on the part of the Spanish Academy [RAE] to sanction some feminised forms. Again, this is a qualitative study though involving some numerical data gleaned via *Google* (Bengoechea et al. 2009: 29) but looking very specifically at single roles – in this case, women bishops. The selection of vocabulary for specific searches will be discussed in the next section, when reviewing corpus creation.

Dumais (2007) looked at feminisations within Quebecois official publications, to see whether the official guidelines on feminisation were actually being followed. Although this study does provide some statistics on approved usages, the percentages presented are difficult to reconcile as the documents studied are not homogeneous and hence the different classifications cannot be compared together. Despite this problem, she suggests that, overall, feminisation is as recommended in only about a third of cases.

A contrastive study of French and Finnish was performed by Naukkarinen (2002) on the premise that Finnish has no grammatical gender. However, in discussing the issues of feminisation in Finnish it is noted that formations of the

type where *-man* or *-woman* is appended to the agentive are frequent. Though this study does not appear to be empirical, primarily reviewing earlier research on the subject of feminisation, it does serve to illustrate that the problem of women's visibility is not restricted to grammatically-gendered languages.

Having initially stated that Finnish lacks grammatical gender, even in the case of 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns, the study ends by describing the case of aristocratic titles, where a clear morphological distinction is made between (e.g.) 'Count' (*kreivi*) and 'Countess' (*kreivitär*). The study also discusses agentive formation using *-mies* [-man] and notes that neologisms with this form continue to be coined, with women themselves preferring to preserve lexical usages of this type rather than invent new words for the roles as the new forms may not have the same prestige (Naukkarinen 2002:665). This concern over loss of prestige is a common theme in many studies, regardless of the languages being analysed or compared.

Contrastive studies are available in the 2000 special issue of the *Bulletin suisse de linguistique appliquée* [Swiss Bulletin of Applied Linguistics: *BSLA*], on feminisation. The special linguistic situation of the country prompts comparisons between French, Italian and German in the Swiss context, with one particularly interesting comment from Matthey (2000) on how long it took each language group to devise a naming convention for the first female member of the federal parliament, in 1984: half an hour for the Germans; two weeks for the French and several months for the Italians (Matthey 2000: 69). There is an assumption here that some languages have 'easier' feminisation morphology than others, with several of the 2000 BSLA papers suggesting the suffix *-in* for German, being very productive, alleviates the problem of resistance to feminisation as it is a widely accepted morphological process. The suggestion is often seen when

referring to Spanish (but not when analysing it directly) since changing final -o to -a, or merely adding -a to a final consonant, is so productive that it promotes feminisation (e.g. Fujimura 2005 suggests this at the end of her study of French).

This brief overview of non-corpus studies in feminisation shows how diverse they can be, but also how narrowly their conclusions must be interpreted. The advantage of corpus studies, as will be shown next, is that wider conclusions can be drawn from exercising greater control over the data.

### **2.3.2.2. Corpus studies**

In the previous section, the studies reviewed were primarily qualitative with little statistical information available that was amenable to clear interpretation. In this section, corpus studies that have looked at the issues of feminisation will be discussed after which their advantages can be assessed.

In the research presented here, most corpora have been collated using specific word lists. In reviewing the choice of these word lists, the basis for the current study's generic search criteria will become evident.

An early corpus study was undertaken by Planelles Iváñez (1996) comparing the French Quebecois press with that of France. For her corpus, Planelles Iváñez pre-selected 24 terms to illustrate different feminisation strategies and problems. The terms chosen had differing proposed feminisations recommended in Canada from the French norm, though each term had several options available to journalists. Additionally, the terms chosen reflected areas of relatively recent female participation, such as 'financial analyst' (Planelles Iváñez: 82). The 24 terms chosen thus had a strong possibility of not being



feminised at all, and in the case where feminisation did occur there were numerous different morphological options available.

For her study, Planelles Iváñez choses a single Canadian media organisation for data collection (*La Presse*) and three French ones: *Le Monde*, *Le Figaro* and *L'Express*. The data collected from these sources is from different time periods: the French data is from 1990-3 but with examples from 1983 and 1984 also included; the Canadian data is from 1989-90 (Planelles Iváñez :73). Based on the previously-mentioned research by Brick and Wilks (1997) the mixing of feminisation examples taken from the French press is of concern, as clear editorial policies were identified in interviews with the editors that suggested differences in house style regarding feminisation between, for example, *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*. There are risks, therefore, in creating raw figures for 'French' and 'Canadian' usage (Planelles Ivanez 1996:102-104) that cross publication boundaries and then comparing these results against each other.

Dister (2004) elaborates on the theme of pejoration in her review of the Belgian press. Having collected a corpus of 6 million words from *Le Soir* (Dister 2004:315) she analyses the feminisation of the word form as well as the grammatical gender given to the base form and discovers inconsistencies in usage even within one article, which she concludes is illustrative of the fact that linguistic evolution is taking place and that the 'correct' rules have not yet been agreed by the linguistic community (Dister 2004:324). Dister's study again begins from a fixed list of agentives, but looks specifically at the referent to determine their sex. A classification is then possible of masculine uses that are specific or generic, as well as unfeminised references to women. Extending this refinement of roles and people, some feminised agentives were found to refer to the incumbent's wife, even in the case of the profession of 'pharmacist' – and

this from texts produced in 2001 (Dister 2004: 317) – which has been open to women for a considerable time. The corpus also produces some instances of *femme* (woman) in conjunction with job titles, such as doctor, pilot or commissioner. Although only a single publication is reviewed in this study, it is possible to determine that the differences noted are not attributable to specific journalists, and there are again differences of usage within a single article (Dister 2004: 322). This detailed analysis required the pre-selection of the professional terms to be analysed (Dister 2004: 316) but neither the list of these nor the criteria for their selection appears evident. The drawback here is that some chosen words did not appear with female referents during the period of corpus collation: for example, of the military titles chosen, one had no female referents and another only a single instance out of 70 occurrences (Dister 2004: 321).

Dister notes that the method used in her corpus analysis to retrieve female referents of pre-selected agentives has advantages over that employed by Fujimura (2005) who created her corpus via a list of 200 female forenames. Dister's corpus creation via a list of selection criteria obviously has the risk of retrieving no data for particular items as they do not appear in the news at all during the period of data collection.

Fujimura (2005) in using female forenames to create her corpus, has the advantage of retrieving agentives associated with women but this method would fail to retrieve those where only the referent's last name was in use (though the tendency to use women's first names where men's are omitted is widespread: see, for example, Crolley & Teso 2007). Whilst Fujimura analyses only the press within France, her study attempts to gauge the before/after impact of language reforms by performing a chronological comparison of feminisations.

However, in concluding, she suggests that feminisation may not only be more advanced in Quebec, citing yet again their early entry into guideline production, but also that feminisation is more advanced in the Spanish language because Spanish allows determiners to agree with the sex of the referent (Fujimura 2005:49). This suggests that a contrastive study may highlight interesting differences between French and Spanish, and hence the current study will use data from both languages.

A contrastive study of French and Italian is made by Saffi (2009) extending the French study by Van Compernelle (2008) to Italian feminisation suffixes. Van Compernelle's paper assessed students' attitudes to neologistic feminisations and found strong resistance to particular forms. Saffi takes these suffixes in their Italian version and performs internet searches via *Google.it* to gauge the proportion of use they receive. Again, the selection of search terms is made at the beginning of the study, though in this case it is taken from prior French research. The use of all pages in Italian found by *Google* for statistical purposes limits the comparability of this with other studies, as no restrictions have been placed on the type of language encountered (e.g. any text from personal blogs to official government documents could be retrieved). In contrast, a further French language study uses an even more restricted environment than that of the national press to search for feminisations made in the political literatures of Belgium and France.

Dister and Moreau (2006) compared how the published profiles for the European Elections of 1989 and 2003 described the profession of the female candidates in Belgium and in France. They are able to present figures suggesting feminisation is more widespread in Belgium than in France, and that advances in feminisation have occurred between the two dates. They also note

distinct political differences in terms of feminisation, similar to those found by Brick and Wilks (2002) in party publications. In this latter study, percentages of feminisations for party publications are given showing that parties on the right of the political divide feminise less than those on the left.

Whilst considerable work has been done to assess and compare the impact of feminisation proposals in various French- and Spanish-speaking environments, the above review has shown that there are very few studies comparing different varieties of one language and that those studies which do compare languages against one another are rare. No research appears to compare French with Spanish, though researchers in French have been seen to suggest, anecdotally, that the situation in Spanish is better adapted to feminisation<sup>24</sup>. Similarly, the early publication of official guidelines in Canada has given the impression that the Canadian situation is more advanced than that of French in Continental Europe, but the available research has not proved this to be the case. As has been shown, it is not possible to take existing research and clearly compare the situation in different French-speaking countries since differences in the data collection method between countries (for example, different date ranges or types of publication) make cross-country comparisons unreliable. In the next section, a proposal for improving on the existing research will be made, and then, in the final section of this chapter, research papers that can be used to build a foundation for a comprehensive study of feminisation will be discussed in detail.

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<sup>24</sup> See, for example, Fujimura (2005).

### **2.3.3. Towards a consolidated view of feminisation**

Previous research on the feminisation of agentives does not allow for a comparison of the situation in French and Spanish, two languages with similar issues of grammatical gender although Spanish does appear to have simpler options available, morphologically, when referring to women. Also, little research has explicitly compared the situation in Canada with that of European French, and no studies were found making cross-country comparisons within the Spanish-speaking world.

Dictionary studies, although unlikely to be illustrative of contemporary usage, have highlighted the risks of pejoration when looking long-term at how language referring to women has evolved. For this reason it is important for research on language change, in the specific context of feminist language reform, to monitor the way in which women are actually being portrayed, in naturally occurring language. To this end, a study of natural language that allows for particular roles in the real world to be compared across languages and countries may highlight more general issues of women's visibility in society, and a study of the media is ideal in this context since, as previously noted (see section 2.2.2.1) the language of the media has a direct influence on the colloquial language within a society.

#### **2.3.3.1. Corpus creation issues**

The current study proposes to collate a corpus of agentives gleaned from the media of multiple countries, where an official language is either French or Spanish. Feminisation issues subsequently found to be common to multiple locations can then be considered independently of the local grammar, to determine whether sexual stereotyping and pejoration are more pertinent than

grammatical gender to explain them. In considering the issues identified in the previous section relating to how data is collected for study, the collation of such a corpus should not be restrained by word-lists based either on forenames or job titles, as there are drawbacks to both these methods. However, as previous, word-based selections have tended to restrict their target word-lists to around 20 items, a target of at least 30 male/female agentive matches will be set for the corpus in the present study.

### **2.3.3.2. Other common considerations in corpus creation**

One common aspect of studies that do restrict by word-lists is the variety of word forms chosen for this list. Typically, these reflect items with different feminisation options open to the authors, or where it is already known that some countries have made very specific recommendations about a particular feminine form – for example, the Canadian feminisation of 'author' (*auteure*) is often cited as being specific to that country, with other Francophone nations considering the base form to be variably-gendered. Several studies alluded to the concept of how 'easy' it is to feminise a word form: ease being an unquantified concept but one often invoked when describing, for example, the German feminisation suffix *-in*. The final section of this chapter will describe the research papers used as a basis for such decision-making in the current thesis and highlight how they will influence the corpus collation and the classification of its entries.

## **2.4. Strategies for creating a corpus to study media feminisations**

In this final section, several papers with strong relevance to the strategies chosen within this study will be described and their later utilisation will be postulated. Firstly, some general requirements suggested from previous studies

will be explained, after which the papers used directly in the data analysis will be presented.

### **2.4.1. Grammatical gender across languages and countries**

In choosing to perform a contrastive study of feminisations, the work of Dawes (2003), whose paper spans the Francophone world from Canada to Switzerland, highlights several important considerations. She gives a clear view of the gender classification possible in the French language with three options presented: single-gendered nouns, such as *personne* [person] or *victime* [victim]; variably-gendered nouns, such as *journaliste* [journalist] and finally items where gender is determined by a suffix, such as *menteur/menteuse* [liar (m/f)] noting that in the Middle Ages the feminine version of nouns for professional roles tended to refer only to a position-holder's wife. Dawes makes the interesting observation that the proximity of non-French, co-official languages in Canada, Belgium and Switzerland may be influencing the national debate on sexism and feminisation at those locations in a way that is not possible in France where only a single language is officially sanctioned. She highlights also the issue concerning certain professional titles, such as 'secretary', which can be feminised in the context of a low-status occupation (e.g. personal assistant) but not when referring to high-status roles (e.g. secretary of state). Bearing these suggestions in mind, the context of references taken into the corpus for the present study may be needed for subsequent phases of analysis.

Other French researchers (e.g. Fleischman 1997) point to the fundamental involvement of the French language in its country's constitution as creating

problems for language reformers. A 2009 article in *L'Express*<sup>25</sup>, for instance, announces the first use of a regional language (Occitan) on the French public transport system which apparently caused controversy, if not anger, amongst passengers and local government representatives. Socialist councillors saw the introduction of a regional language, in preference to the perceived 'internationalisation' to be brought by introducing English or Spanish, as a retrograde step, taking the system back into history rather than towards the modern world. This is just one illustration of how French citizens and officials may see the French language as a political, as well as a social, method of unification and hence a symbol of national identity, which Fleischman attests as going all the way back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Fleischman 1997:840). She later states that this:

has maintained the French language in a virtual straitjacket in France and its speakers in a state of veritable paranoia with regard to innovation or the creation of new vocabulary (Fleischman 1997:841).

Differences between Canada and France may, therefore, have different political causes, aside from the previously-mentioned proximity of Canadian French to the Anglo-Saxon tradition of political correctness. This may be reflected in the political outlook of the media agency in which reports appear, so the source agency must be captured explicitly for each reference found during corpus collation.

Bengoechea et al. (2009) make the point that masculinisations can also be problematic, citing the lack of masculine versions of words such as 'prostitute' in

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<sup>25</sup> See [http://www.lexpress.fr/region/a-toulouse-le-metro-parle-languedocien\\_793224.html](http://www.lexpress.fr/region/a-toulouse-le-metro-parle-languedocien_793224.html), consulted 1<sup>st</sup> November 2009.



the Spanish Academy's dictionary [DRAE]. It is important that the proposed corpus can accommodate the capture of anomalous male references, even though the primary research is concentrating on agentive references to women.

Another key statement to be borne in mind when compiling the corpus comes from Houdebine-Gravaud:

*Comme il n'existe en français que deux genres, on ne devrait pas qualifier le masculin de neutre.* [As there are only two genders in French one should not label the masculine one as 'neuter'.] (Houdebine-Gravaud 2003:52)

This is even more pertinent to Spanish, where many plurals referring to humans are taken from the masculine singular: there is no separate word for 'siblings', for example, the correct usage being identical in form to 'brothers' and its interpretation dependent on context<sup>26</sup>. The current study will therefore explicitly exclude any plural references, even though named individuals may appear within them.

Lastly in this chapter, works to be taken as fundamental inputs to the current study will be described. These fall into two groups: style recommendations directed towards writers and grammatical gender classifications based on word form.

### **2.4.2. Guidelines for non-sexist writing**

In choosing feminisation guidelines for use in the current study, the primary consideration was that of compatibility between the languages and countries under investigation. As has previously been noted (see section 2.2.2.3) Canada

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<sup>26</sup> It is common, for example, to see the Spanish royal couple referred to as *los reyes* [the kings] which unambiguously means 'the king and queen'.

produced agentive feminisation guidelines long before France, and hence a document produced within one French-speaking country is unlikely to apply to others. Similarly, a document that covers the Spanish of both Europe and Latin America is unlikely to be published at a national level.

The European Union has produced cross-linguistic gender-equality guidelines for the production of official documents, but these would obviously not apply to the American continents. As a result, the United Nations was investigated as a source of feminisation standards that would be applicable to all of the countries in the study and its French and Spanish recommendations were also produced in exactly the same year, 1999 (Desprez-Bouanchaud Doolaege & Ruprecht 1999; Paoli 1999). Decisions on whether a feminisation found in the corpus conforms to 'recommendations' are therefore based on these two documents, with three options available: no feminisation occurs where some was recommended; feminisation occurs where it was not recommended or feminisation does occur in a recommended context but not in the suggested format. Similarly, both guideline documents promote the use of determiner agreement based on the sex of the referent where human agency is involved, giving a fourth type of non-conformance, relating now to the determiner instead of the agentive.

### **2.4.3. Grammatical gender by word form**

In addition to the feminisation strategy conforming to guidelines on gender-neutral language, one advantage of a cross-linguistic study is the ability to judge societal influence on adherence to feminisations. It is therefore important to be able to assign each agentive found in the corpus a 'base' gender, independent

of that found in a dictionary, suggested purely by its word form and taken here as an indication of how 'easy' it should be to feminise.

Research focussed on second-language learners provides for a classification of word forms by postulating rules, based on the word-ending (either graphical or phonetic) to aid the learner from a language lacking grammatical gender to deduce the correct gender of new words in the target language. This is achieved through the use of 'reverse dictionaries' that list words in the reverse order of their letters instead of the normal reading order. Research in both Spanish and French has been undertaken to classify word forms as 'strongly masculine', 'strongly feminine' or 'ambiguous' based on the proportion of words within a group which fall into a single gender. For example: in French, 99% of words ending /ã/ are masculine, therefore words ending *-ent*, *-an*, *-ant* etc. can be considered 'strongly masculine' and a person encountering an unfamiliar lexical item with one of these endings can assume it to be masculine (Lyster 2006:76).

For the present study, agentives found in the corpus will be classed as 'strongly masculine', 'strongly feminine' or 'ambiguous' based on their forms as categorised in the research papers described below.

#### **2.4.3.1. French**

To classify the degree of gender predictability for French agentives, Lyster (2006) is taken as the reference work. This classifies French word-endings phonetically, with additional example lists of graphical representations provided for each phonetic realisation. Where more than 90% of words with the same phonetic ending are of the same grammatical gender they are considered

strongly gendered, otherwise they are ambiguously gendered. French agentives in the corpus will be classified according to this work by Lyster.

### **2.4.3.2. Spanish**

For Spanish the primary work to be used, giving equivalent classifications as Lyster does for French, is Bergen (1978). Spanish pronunciation being regular with respect to spelling, the classifications here are graphical rather than phonetic.

In addition to Bergen, however, a further work by Teschner (1983) is used to discuss the set of words terminating in the consonant -z, where Teschner provides a more refined classification, based on the penultimate vowel, than Bergen.

## **2.5. Summary**

In this chapter, Section 2.2 reviewed works showing that improving the visibility of women via the use of agentives with sex-appropriate grammatical gender is important, since psychological responses to language still exhibit stereotyped assumptions of male protagonists potentially rendering women's agency invisible. As also discussed, media language influences colloquial usages, so the media representation of women is a significant area for study.

Section 2.3.1 reviewed the study of meta-language, within dictionaries or feminisation guidelines, which has good research coverage but is limited by the choice of publishing organisation, showing, for example, the attitudes of the language academies or local/regional governments to the problem, but with only tangential relevance to actual usage.

Moving to natural language studies, in Section 2.3.2 it was illustrated that most previous research into feminisation within the media has been at a local level, studying one country or one type of language across countries, such as political party press-releases. Where comparison of a language across regions has been attempted, little quantitative information has been produced. Research touching on feminist interests has often been criticised for being predominantly qualitative, prompting the need for a reply to this in recent years: see, for example, Hughes and Cohen (2010) or Scott (2010) for a discussion of quantitative research methods in feminist studies. Scott, in particular, argues that mixed methods are required to adequately address female experience when researching in the social sciences, as quantitative methods are not easily applied to problems where case studies are better placed to illustrate underlying issues. She also suggests that quantitative studies can help direct qualitative research, and this will be the approach taken in the present research.

In reviewing existing research on the media, both qualitative and quantitative in Section 2.3, anecdotal remarks by various researchers suggest, perhaps because ‘the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence’, that language-groups other than their own have an easier time of it, because some morphological systems are more suited to feminisations than others. Whilst contrastive studies between languages with different gender-systems have been discussed above, only one study of similarly-gendered languages was found, comparing French with Italian (Saffi 2009) and its scope was limited to a very few lexemes.

The intention of the present study, therefore, is to compare media feminisations across languages (French and Spanish) and regions (Europe and the Americas) using a corpus study, but without limiting the data collection by pre-

defined word- or name-lists as has previously been the case. In addition, the agentives that are collated will be classed for the strength of their grammatical gender attribution, thus allowing their 'ease' of feminisation to be assessed.

The next chapter will discuss in detail the decisions made in collating a corpus for this study and will describe how the data will be stored and categorised. Subsequent chapters will show the results of first quantitative, then qualitative methods of analysing the contents of such a corpus.

### 3. Chapter 3. Methodology

*L'idée du prestige de la fonction est reprise par Le Monde qui accepterait de féminiser les fonctions peu importants, mais refuse celles qui jouissent de plus de prestige*

[The idea of the prestige of a function is reaffirmed by *Le Monde* which would accept the feminisation of functions with little importance but refuses it for those which benefit from higher prestige]

(Brick & Collie 1990:302)

#### 3.1. Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, although researchers have investigated grammatical feminisation, the majority of previous studies involved dictionary compilation and their revision between different editions, rather than language in use. Where journalistic language has been investigated, the type of study has tended to be qualitative and the data collection has been over a period of a few days or weeks, due to the difficulty of manual collation. This has often limited the journalistic studies to a search for specific terms, pre-selected by the researcher. These technical limitations on data collection have the potential to mask wider issues of grammatical feminisation since only a small fraction of the potentially available data is collected in each study, and then considered in isolation from the body of journalistic language for referring to women.

In discussing previous studies, it was also noted that single-language or -region research papers sometimes anecdotally referred to other languages or regions as being more 'advanced' in grammatical feminisation, though without citing specific evidence. No existing body of research appears to consider cross-linguistic, or even cross-regional, similarities or differences in grammatical feminisation.

These two perceived limitations – manual and single-source data collection – are addressed in the current study. Firstly, it is the aim of this project to automatically gather pertinent data to the study of grammatical feminisation by using Internet-based tools. Secondly, and dependent on the use of automated corpus-gathering features, multiple speech communities are to be investigated within a single study, across two grammatically similar languages which have old- and new-world varieties, giving four distinct sets of data. Once this data was available, the remainder of the study would be driven by the corpus contents, with no pre-conceived structures or selections being applied to the journalistic sources.

This chapter describes the data collection method and subsequent decisions made regarding data classification. Firstly, the data collection tools are described and the collection method is elaborated. The data storage and tools for data analysis are then detailed, after which the raw corpus data is described more fully, leading on to the classification decisions made and how these were applied to the corpus. The final description of the enriched data will show how this serves as input to the quantitative analysis, available in Chapter 4, and the qualitative analysis given in Chapter 5.

### **3.2. Web-based corpus collation**

The basis for this study was the gathering of a significant corpus of media references to named women and men, across paired language and regional groups, namely: French and Spanish; continental European and continental American. The primary tool chosen to aid in the corpus creation was the online concordancer *GlossaNet*, provided by the *Université catholique de Louvain*<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>See <http://glossa.fltr.ucl.ac.be>, consulted 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013.



[The Catholic University of Louvain] but further refinement of the initial corpus data was required, and two further electronic resources were employed for this purpose: *WebCorp*<sup>28</sup> and *Google*<sup>29</sup>.

### 3.2.1. GlossaNet

*GlossaNet* was originally developed in the late 1990s to facilitate automated corpus creation from news agency websites (Fairon, Mace, & Naets 2008)<sup>30</sup>. It utilises *Unitex*, another tool maintained at the *Université catholique de Louvain*, which acts as an automated grammatical tagging function, classifying the text it processes based on electronic dictionaries that are maintained and expanded over time, progressively incorporating new languages and even new alphabets (e.g. Cyrillic).

Though originally allowing access to only a limited number of web-based publications, with the advent of RSS (Rich Site Summary) feeds from the news media, it was possible to extend *GlossaNet* to any site using this medium, creating what was dubbed *GlossaNet 2*. This uses the original tagging features but allows bespoke application of them to any site using RSS feeds, as the feeds are monitored daily by the *Université catholique de Louvain* and the newly uploaded articles they refer to on the media site are then tagged using *Unitex* to cumulatively create a tagged corpus of data from that internet source.

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<sup>28</sup> See <http://webcorp.org.uk>, consulted 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013.

<sup>29</sup> See the *Google* company's website at: <https://www.google.co.uk>.

<sup>30</sup> Fairon, who was one of the original designers of *GlossaNet* is used as the source for all subsequent information given on the development of this tool. See also Fairon and Singler (2006).

Once the source data has been tagged, a stored query can then be run over the results to retain only those articles of interest for their grammatical form or lexical content. This could, for example, be used to search for new coinages by querying for items not found in the electronic dictionary used by *Unitex*, or more simply used for non-linguistic research to find articles whose topic is, for example, unemployment, by listing words that would likely appear in articles on that topic: e.g. *unemploy* in all its lexical forms (noun, verb, adjective); *out of work* as a phrase; *seeking* in the environment (*n* words before/after) of *work* or *job*, etc.

As can be seen from these brief examples, *GlossaNet* is a powerful tool but obviously it is limited by its electronic dictionaries<sup>31</sup>. Issues in this context will be discussed when describing the data collection in detail (see, for example, page 60, below).

*GlossaNet* was the primary tool used in this study to collect a corpus of media references to actual people. However, to fully understand the results from *GlossaNet* in their context, it was necessary to employ other electronic resources to enrich and clarify the initial *GlossaNet* corpus. Additional data was retrieved using *WebCorp*, and clarifications were elicited using *Google* as described below.

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<sup>31</sup> The French dictionary used is described at: <http://www-igm.univ-mlv.fr/~unitex/index.php?page=5&html=bibliography.html#french> ; the Spanish at: <http://www-igm.univ-mlv.fr/~unitex/index.php?page=5&html=bibliography.html#spanish> (pages consulted 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2013).

### 3.2.2. WebCorp

*WebCorp*<sup>32</sup>, maintained at Birmingham City University, is an online concordancer, which invokes a user-selected, commercial search engine (e.g. *Google*, *Bing*) to retrieve target web pages, after which those pages are parsed at source to create concordance lines based on the initial query. Wild-card queries are available, and post-processing of the data allows collocation counts, date filtering and sorting over the initial results. Unlike *GlossaNet*, no grammatical tagging is available and *WebCorp*'s language selection option is pertinent to the underlying commercial search engine only.

*WebCorp* was used in the study to attempt to clarify and extend some of the results obtained via *GlossaNet*, by making specific lexical queries to enrich the *GlossaNet* corpus. Limitations on its date processing will be described when discussing *WebCorp*'s use in the corpus creation, as these did require some manual effort to resolve, as will be shown in Section 3.3.3, below.

### 3.2.3. Google

*Google* was used during the qualitative analysis phase to make specific additional searches for named individuals who were present in the original corpus. In the initial stages of the data collection, it was also used occasionally to confirm the sex of referents with ambiguously spelled given names – for example: *Laurence*, in a French Canadian context, could be referring to an Anglophone man or a Francophone woman. By searching for multiple media references to the same person and/or reported incident, it was possible to determine whether the referent was indeed male or female.

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<sup>32</sup> Overview taken from <http://www.webcorp.org.uk/live/guide-how.jsp> (consulted 1<sup>st</sup> Feb 2013).

### **3.3. Data collection**

In this section, the initial corpus creation is described in detail. The use of the three tools detailed in the previous section is elaborated while cumulative decisions about the data collection process are explained.

The primary collection tool is *GlossaNet*.

#### **3.3.1. Base corpus-gathering via GlossaNet**

GlossaNet was used to collect data for six months, between February and July 2010. As described in the previous section, *GlossaNet* allows access to internet-based versions of the national press in many countries, so an initial study used data from France, Reunion Island, Spain, Quebec and Argentina, as these French and Spanish sources were readily available in the base *GlossaNet* repository. The list of media organisations accessed in this first phase of collection is detailed in Table 2 in Section 3.3.2.

##### **3.3.1.1. Search criteria**

The automatic tagging utilised by *GlossaNet* allows for refined search criteria to be defined looking for the specific grammatical and/or lexical context required by the researcher. In this study, the intention was to find agentive references to named men and women, collecting the individual's name, the agentive form and any determiner used with the agentive. This base amount of data would allow further refinements post-collection, as will be described later.

To create the initial corpus, therefore, phrases of the form ‘<*determiner*> <*noun*> <*proper noun*>’ or ‘<*proper noun*> <*determiner*> <*noun*>’ were searched for via *GlossaNet*. as in the examples below:

1. *le président Chirac* [the <determiner> president <noun> Chirac <proper noun>]

or

2. *Joaquín Sabina, el cantante* [Joaquín Sabina <proper noun> the <determiner> singer <noun>]

The intention with this search was to provide references to named individuals together with their profession or their contextual role within the media article – which could be unrelated to their normal life, for example: ‘the victim’.

It should be noted here that the distinction between 'proper noun' and 'noun' is one inherent to the *GlossaNet* dictionaries in use. Where the item does not appear in the language-specific dictionary and the grammatical context suggests it should be classified as a noun, it will be considered a proper noun. Capitalisation can also be taken into account in French and Spanish, though sentence case can make this difficult if the item appears after a period mark. Typically then, an item is considered a proper noun by *GlossaNet* if it is absent from the dictionary, capitalised and the remaining grammatical context allows it to be considered a noun.

*GlossaNet* runs the requested queries on a daily basis, for a selected period. Each day, the results are collated and can be downloaded from the *GlossaNet* site in a variety of formats: for example, comma-separated or formatted as a web page using *html*, the former being ideal for reading into spreadsheets, such as MS/Excel and the latter for text editors, such as MS/Word.

When downloading the *GlossaNet* data, as well as the matches and the name of the website from which the data was gleaned, the full web address (URL) of

the media article is also available, which was later used to retrieve the full article text, as will be described next.

### **3.3.1.2. Data filtering**

As can be imagined with such generic search criteria, many of the matches found did not refer to people, as intended, but to hospitals, museums, hotels or other institutions named for a person or place (e.g. *Le Centre Pompidou* [The Pompidou Centre]). The majority of these were in fact streets named in honour of famous people and were easy to remove by excluding the various words for street or road in French and Spanish. Manual filtering of the remaining items was required, however, though this was usually possible to do simply by using the concordance lines provided by *GlossaNet*, prior to downloading the data.

### **3.3.1.3. Initial data storage**

Where the query results did indeed provide a person and agentive combination, rather than a reference to a public building or eponymous street, the concordance line produced by *GlossaNet* was retained and extracted to MS/Excel. As mentioned previously (see section 3.3.1.1) *GlossaNet* allows easy export to MS/Excel via a comma-separated download, so as an interim storage medium, before beginning detailed analysis, MS/Excel was convenient both in terms of the standard features of *GlossaNet* and as a simple repository for the data. The underlying news article was subsequently retrieved in full via its URL and stored as a text file for later reference.

Within Excel, the following information was coded for each of the retained query results:

- the sex of the individual (M/F) – often clear from the original concordance, sometimes requiring checks against the full text of the article but occasionally necessitating further investigation, as will be described in the subsection on *Google*, below;
- the name of the individual, as it appears in the concordance;
- the form of the noun used for the agentive, as it appears in the concordance;
- the determiner appearing in the concordance;
- the media organisation in which the report appeared (as exported from *GlossaNet*);
- the country in which the report appeared (as exported from *GlossaNet*);
- the language (French or Spanish) of the media report (as exported from *GlossaNet*);
- an English translation (masculine) of the agentive, to be used to join together the masculine and feminine version(s) of the foreign nouns across the two languages under study.

#### **3.3.1.4. Data enrichment using Google**

In some cases, as was suggested previously (see Section 3.2.3) the sex of the referent was not clear from either the *GlossaNet* concordance nor from the full text of the original media article. For example, it could be that an individual with an ambiguous name was described as 'victim', which agentive has a single gender in both French and Spanish, hence pronoun references could be referring to the grammatical gender of 'victim' or to the sex of the human referent. In such instances, the name of the individual was used for an explicit

*Google* search, and articles referring to the same individual and incident were then read in an attempt to determine the sex of the referent.

For Canadian media reports, this was often simplified by encountering an English-language report of the same occurrence, meaning the pronouns could be taken at face-value. In some other cases, the media articles encountered included photographs of the subject, which also enabled rapid identification of the subject's gender. A very few original reports did require extensive further searches to be convinced of the sex of the individual, mostly where the given names were extremely unusual to Western ears (e.g. sporting trophy winners from African or Far Eastern countries) but data coding of the retained corpus entries was extensively verified before being stored for analysis.

### 3.3.2. GlossaNet results

Out of around 20,000 potential hits recovered by GlossaNet, approximately 5,000 were found to be phrases of the correct format referring to real individuals whose identities could be verified to ensure a consistent classification of sex (male/female). Table 2, below, shows the raw data volumes obtained.

Language	Country	Media website name	Paper version	Hits
French	Canada	www.cyberpresse.ca	<i>La Presse</i>	278
		www.lapresse.ca/la-tribune/	<i>La Tribune</i>	34
		www.lapresse.ca/la-voix-de-lest/	<i>La Voix de l'Est</i>	9
		www.lapresse.ca/le-droit/	<i>Le Droit</i>	32
		www.lapresse.ca/le-nouvelliste/	<i>Le Nouvelliste</i>	40
		www.lapresse.ca/le-soleil/	<i>Le Soleil</i>	314
	Canada	<b>Total</b>		707



Language	Country	Media website name	Paper version	Hits
	France	www.agoravox.fr	-	11
		www.dna.fr	<i>Dernières Nouvelles d'Alsace</i> <sup>33</sup>	53
		www.ledauphine.com	<i>Le Dauphiné Libéré</i>	2
		www.lavoixdunord.fr	<i>La Voix Du Nord</i>	54
		www.lefigaro.fr	<i>Le Figaro</i>	5
		www.leparisien.fr	<i>Le Parisien</i>	90
		www.lequipe.fr	<i>L'Équipe</i>	9
		www.liberation.fr	<i>Libération</i>	43
		www.nouvelobs.fr	<i>Le Nouvel Observateur</i>	36
		www.sciencesetavenir.fr	<i>Sciences et Avenir</i>	2
	France	<b>Total</b>		305
	Reunion	www.clicanoo.re	<i>Journal de l'île de la Réunion</i>	144
	Reunion	<b>Total</b>		144
French		<b>Total</b>		1156
Spanish	Argentina	www.clarin.com	<i>El Diario</i>	937
		www.voxpopuli.com.ar	-	178
	Argentina	<b>Total</b>		1115
	Spain	www.abc.es	<i>ABC</i>	629
		www.elmundo.es	<i>El Mundo</i>	714
		www.elpais.es	<i>El País</i>	1423
	Spain	<b>Total</b>		2766
Spanish		<b>Total</b>		3881

<sup>33</sup> Comprising: *La Nuée Bleue*; *L'Alsace*; *Le Bien Public*; *L'Est Républicain*; *Le Dauphiné Libéré*; *Le Journal de Saône-et-Loire*; *Le Progrès*; *Le Républicain*; *Lorrain*; *Vosges Matin*; *Journal parlé*.

Language	Country	Media website name	Paper version	Hits
<b>Total</b>				5037

Table 2: Data instances found, by country and organisation

As can be seen in Table 2, considerably more Spanish data than French was recovered using this method. This appears to be a stylistic problem, with francophone journalists using the phraseology of the search more rarely than their Hispanic counterparts. As a result of this, further searches were required to retrieve sufficient volumes of matching French-language data for the Spanish agentives retrieved. For the same reason, the data from Reunion Island was initially retained as some feminisations were highlighted that were later the subject of specific searches in domains from France and Canada, as will be described later (see Section 3.4.2.1).

### 3.3.3. Data expansion using WebCorp

For the next phase of data collection, the MS/Excel spreadsheet was loaded into a MySQL<sup>34</sup> database. This allowed simple queries to be run over the data set in order to group and count the entries. Although some simple grouping algorithms can be utilised in MS/Excel via pivot tables, structured query language (SQL) is more powerful and flexible and performs queries more quickly over large datasets. As the overall analysis used data-driven techniques, exporting the corpus data to a powerful and flexible database

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<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.mysql.com/> consulted 10<sup>th</sup> February 2013. MySQL is an Open Source relational database management system. The MySQL database software was installed on both Linux and MS/Windows 7 during the data analysis phase of the study. Note that the Linux version was more reliable with the character sets required for this study (i.e. French/Spanish accented data).

product was done as soon as data collection was initially considered to be complete.

The next requirement for cross-source data classification was to provide a linking point for the agentives retrieved across the different media, and this was achieved by providing a single (masculine) English translation of the agentive for each entry. This allowed, for example, the Spanish words for 'judge' (*juez/jueza*) to be linked to the French equivalent(s) (*judge*). At this point it was clear that certain agentives found in the Spanish data were unavailable in the French data, and that some items which were found in the French data were not appearing with a sufficient gender or regional spread to be useful to the later analysis.

An additional phase of data collection was therefore required, searching for specific French words. These lexemes were entered as wild-card strings in *WebCorp* searches, for the countries where they were not matched: for example, the word *maire* with a wild-card ending was searched for in France, since Canadian data and that from Reunion Island had given gender-matched results while the data from France had not.

The *WebCorp* facility, as described above, utilises existing search engines – primarily *Google* – to search within an internet domain (e.g. *lemonde.fr*) for pages with a range of dates. The data range was set to the calendar year 2010 for the additional searches, which were launched in October of that year.

Despite the addition of a time period to the *WebCorp* searches, many of the news articles retrieved were much older than 2010, dating back as far as 1998.

The *WebCorp* user manual states:

WebCorp uses a series of heuristics to find the last modified date of web pages, going beyond the techniques used by standard search engines. On the results page you will be presented with the source of the date, which will be (in order of reliability) 1:Server Header, 2:Date Metatag, 3:Author-Specified Modification Date in Document Body, 4:Copyright Date, or 5:Date in URL.<sup>35</sup>

The key word here appears to be 'modified', as media organisations will often archive older news articles to new URLs, hence the last modified date may be much more recent than the initial publication date. Unfortunately, there was no way to choose which date to employ in the searches, so much of the data retrieved using *WebCorp* had to be manually filtered to ensure the original publication date was within the same period as the data collected from *GlossaNet*.

Those articles that did fall within the required time period and fulfilled the same criteria as originally used – referring to a named individual whose sex could be determined – were retained and gave a further 721 data records for analysis.

The data collected so far was then summarised by explicit foreign word, using the *MySQL* database: using standard features of SQL (structured query language) the database was searched for *distinct* instances of agentives (taking the base masculine form) by language, country and gender of the referent, ignoring the referent's name and publication source, and joining instances of female referents to those of male referents for the same agentive. This resulted in 41 distinct, gender-matched agentives for French and 94 for Spanish, as shown in Table 4. The full list of agentives found, by English translation, is given

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<sup>35</sup> See <http://www.webcorp.org.uk/live/guide-post.jsp> consulted 10<sup>th</sup> February 2013.

in Table 9, with tables 10 and 11 giving the original matched agentives from French and Spanish, respectively.

At this point in the data collection process, it was decided that sufficient raw information was available for analysis. This data now required enrichment to enable its classification for the quantitative and qualitative analyses to proceed.

### **3.3.4. Data enrichment for analysis**

Having retrieved a corpus of phrases containing an agentive and its referent, additional classification of these was required in order to allow the quantitative and qualitative investigations to proceed. The enrichment falls into three categories: classifying the masculine agentives' word forms, to gauge how easy this morphological form would be to feminise; classifying the feminised agentives based on the 'non sexist guidelines' employed for this study, and finally classifying the agentives so they can be grouped into related job- or associative lists.

#### **3.3.4.1. Agentive word forms and their 'default' gender**

At this point, the study draws on research from the area of foreign language education in order to classify the masculine word forms of the gender-matched agentives into three groups: those whose word form is normally associated with masculine gender; those normally associated with feminine gender and those lacking a strong tendency for one grammatical gender or the other (i.e. gender-ambiguous with regard to their morphological form). The basis of these classifications is drawn from studies aimed at second language teachers and learners of the French and Spanish languages.

For those students of gendered second languages coming from an English-speaking background – or that of any other language, such as many in the Far East, which has no system of grammatical gender – all the nouns they learn must be accompanied by grammatical gender, and many guidelines are produced for educators to help them teach their students the patterns that most usually determine gender categorisation in the target language. For example, in French words ending in *-ment* are usually masculine (e.g. *le gouvernement, un tourment*) whilst those ending *-ance* are usually feminine (e.g. *la tendance, la nuance*). In compiling rules for determining the likely gender of a noun, researchers often use 'reverse dictionaries', which list words in the reverse order of their letters (e.g. that produced by Faitelson-Waiser (1987)) a task which has been simplified with the advent of 'electronic' dictionaries (see, for example, Cartagena 1997). This method results in lists of word-endings, either graphical or phonetic, which can then be grouped to see which are most likely to be of a particular gender (Bergen 1978; Lyster 2006). This is achieved by taking gender percentage figures for each phonetic or graphical ending, and if this figure is very high for one or other gender then newly-encountered words with that ending can usually be assumed to be of one gender. Where the words fall fairly evenly between the two genders, then no general rule can be formulated for second-language learners in the context of that word form, and the words' genders must be learned discretely.

For the two languages in this study, the form of the masculine and feminine words requires analysis to determine how 'grammatically masculine' or 'grammatically feminine' the base word form is. This can then be used to categorise the masculine agentives retrieved with regard to possible feminisation strategies.

### 3.3.4.1.1. French word forms

For French, work by Lyster on French phonology and gender (Lyster 2006) was taken as an initial basis for classifying the lexicon of agentives. Lyster describes his method as follows:

Feminine endings predict feminine gender for at least 90 per cent of nouns with these endings;

Masculine endings predict masculine gender for at least 90 per cent of nouns with these endings;

Ambiguous endings indicate that fewer than 90 per cent of nouns with these endings are of only one gender. (Lyster 2006:73).

The phonetic data available from Lyster had to be expanded to give graphical lists matching the spelling of the data retrieved in the corpus. An example from Lyster is given below:

*/ã/ Masc (volcan): -an, -anc, -and, -ang, -ant, -ent, -amp, -emps, -aon*  
(Lyster 2006:76).

Lyster states that 99% of words ending */ã/* are masculine, so words with the graphical endings referenced were updated to show masculine predictability in the data store. Words that had no strong masculine or feminine predictability, classified as less than 90% of one gender by Lyster, were marked as ambiguous (A) following Lyster's convention.

Updates to the data store were performed using simple SQL statements on the MySQL database, via wild-card selections specifying only the end of the word (e.g. *'-an'*). Items classified by Lyster as strongly masculine or strongly feminine were updated to 'M' or 'F', respectively, and the remaining items were updated to 'A' (ambiguous).

### **3.3.4.1.2. Spanish word forms**

For Spanish, an initial analysis of feminisation was done in line with Bergen's notes on the Spanish lexicon (Bergen 1978). As Spanish phonology closely matches spelling, the classifications here were graphical in the source material, and a fairly small list of word-endings was available as 'strongly masculine' or 'strongly feminine' after which remaining words were classified as being ambiguous. Again, updates to the data store were performed using simple SQL statements on the MySQL database, via wild-card selections specifying only the end of the word (e.g. '*-ista*').

As will be described later (see Section 5.4.1.4), Teschner (1983) refined Bergen's classifications with regard to words ending -z by including the preceding vowel in a reverse dictionary analysis, as practised by Lyster (2006) for French. His refinements were prompted by a concern that Bergen's classifications had been over-simplified, to aid only novice students of Spanish, and hence limited as a tool for discussing linguistic patterning at a more general level – for example, in his undergraduate Spanish linguistics classes (Teschner 1983:252). Teschner's refinements were later incorporated into the stored data corpus after initial qualitative analysis revealed discrepancies for some Spanish language agentives ending -z. His classifications will be described in more detail in the chapter 4.

### **3.3.4.2. Comparison of data to UN guidelines**

For each language, the UN guidelines for feminisation were then used to determine whether the feminine version of the agentive corresponded to the recommendations therein.



The UN guidelines were selected here because they represent a single organisation's view for each of the languages under study. Many 'local' guidelines are available, but these vary in detail and political outlook, which makes it difficult to select comparable guides from the different languages and regions.

For the purpose of comparative analysis, the section on page 10 of the UN guidelines for French (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al. 1999) and on page 22 of the UN guidelines for Spanish (Paoli 1999) has been used to assess whether a particular word form is recommended for feminisation. Although these sections contain examples rather than rules, these have been generalised as follows in order to classify the items in the corpus.

### **Spanish (Paoli 1999:22)**

For the purposes of classification within the corpus, the following rules have been taken for grammatical feminisation of Spanish agentives:

- Words ending -o change to -a
- Words ending in a consonant add -a

*[L]as personas hispanohablantes sienten la terminación -o, y sobre todo la terminación -a, como signos del género masculino y femenino, respectivamente.*

[Spanish speakers feel the word-ending -o, and above all the word-ending -a, as signs of masculine and feminine gender, respectively] (Paoli 1999:18)

Hence, if a Spanish agentive ending –o was encountered in the corpus referring to a woman this instance of the agentive would be classed as non-conformant

to the guidelines. In contrast, if a word ending in any vowel other than –o was changed it would also be classed as non-conformant as only words ending in –o or consonants are to be grammatically feminised based on the criteria given in these guidelines.

### **French (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al. 1999:10)**

The instructions given for French are more extensive than those seen above for Spanish:

- Words ending in a mute -e are unchanged (*architecte* [architect] m/f)
- Words ending in other vowels add –e (*délégué* (m)/*déléguée* (f) [delegate])
- Words ending in -*teur* and formed from a verb change to -*teuse*
- Other words ending in -*teur* change to -*trice*
- Other words ending in -*eur* are unchanged
- Words ending in other consonants add -e, possibly after doubling the consonant or accenting the preceding vowel, if it is -e- (*mécanicien* (m)/*mécanicienne* (f) [mechanic]).
- It is noted that some words ending in consonants do not require change, but should have a feminine determiner for female referents.

While a discussion of the use and basis of guidelines will be given in Chapter 6, at which point other guideline documents will be discussed and their feminisation requirements illustrated, the UN documents were used in the data classification to identify the following potential 'discrepancies' between the corpus data and their recommendations:

- Masculine determiner used to refer to a woman
- No feminisation where it was recommended
- Feminisation occurs but not formed according to the recommendations

For the first of these, a simple addition to the MySQL database was made, to add 'gender of determiner', which was updated automatically based on a unique list of the words encountered in this context: i.e. French and Spanish definite and indefinite articles and gendered prepositions. In some cases, for example French words beginning with a vowel, recourse to the full text of the original article was required to find other instances of the exemplar noun with a gendered determiner. Once the gender of the determiner had been established, a simple query was used to identify cases where this did not match the sex of the referent and to set a flag (a 'Boolean', allowing only the values true/false) to 'true' for corpus entries displaying a mismatch.

To determine the remaining two attributes, the word-ending classifications were compared to the guideline descriptions to see which of these were recommended for feminisation. Where the word form was not feminised but the guidelines suggested it should be, another Boolean flag, identifying this corpus entry as anomalous for feminisation, was set to true. Similarly, if the word was feminised but not according to the suggestions made in the guidelines then a third Boolean flag was set to true identifying the actual feminised form as anomalous.

These three Boolean flags were used in the quantitative analysis but also used to perform queries over the MySQL database for the qualitative data retrievals, allowing immediate selection of potentially anomalous data.

### 3.4. Corpus contents

As described in the previous section, the results of data collection and enrichment stored in MS/Excel and extracted to a MySQL database. For the quantitative analysis, entries were exported from MySQL to *R* in order to produce graphical displays of the corpus contents. For the qualitative analysis, anomalous entries were pulled from the MySQL database using simple queries.

The results of these queries, and more detailed information on the corpus contents, are described in this section. Firstly, the raw contents of the corpus are described in terms of agentive counts and agentive lists. Then, the subsequent enrichment of the data based on classifying the agentives themselves is detailed.

#### 3.4.1. Data counts

This section describes the corpus contents in a series of tables, primarily listing word counts and people counts but also highlighting the anomalous entries that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Across the corpus, the following division of male/female referents was found:

	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>
By corpus entry (raw count of entries)	936	4101	5037
By named individual (people count, removing duplicate references to the same person)	501	2398	2899

Table 3: Sex of referents in the media articles found

Table 3 shows that nearly five times as many male referents as female were found, and over four times as many separate references to named men as there

were to women. Since the data collection period included reporting of a Football World Cup, some of the additional male references are to professional footballers but the high proportion of male to female referents mainly reflects a continued lack of women in newsworthy positions (Caldas-Coulthard 1995). Further totals, given in Table 4, are available to ponder this difference in representation.

Language	All agentives	Matched agentives
French	229	41
Spanish	412	94

Table 4: Total and matched number of job titles found in each language

Table 4 suggests that, in each language data subset, less than a quarter of the agentives found are used with both male and female referents.

Turning, however, to agentives which are matched, in only a handful of them are the men outnumbered by the women. In the French data: princesses were referred to more than princes; spokeswomen more than spokesmen and of three 'stars', two were female. In the Spanish data there were two female gymnasts to one male and two female investigators to one male. For dancers, women outnumbered men three to one and for models: nine to one.

### **3.4.2. Agentives of interest for analysis**

The agents which have exhibited anomalies against the guidelines are described in this section, by the type of anomaly they show.

#### **3.4.2.1. Multiple feminisations**

Table 5 shows the raw data, by language only, where more than one feminisation of the job title is available.

Language	English profession	Feminine version 1	Feminine version 2
French	mayor	maire	mairesse
French	sergeant	sergente	sergent
Spanish	councillor	concejal	concejala
Spanish	judge	juez	jueza
Spanish	poet	poetisa	poeta
Spanish	president	presidente	presidenta

Table 5: Instances of multiple feminisations

selecting from this list of agentives only those instances that refer to women,

Table 6 shows the situation found for French:

Country	English agentive	Determiner	French agentive
Canada	mayor	la	mairesse
Canada	sergeant	la	sergente
Canada	sergeant	le	sergent
Reunion	mayor	la	maire

Table 6: Occurrences of multiple French feminisations, by country

Table 7 shows the situation found for Spanish:

Country	Job in English	Determiner	Job in Spanish
Argentina	councillor	la	concejal
Argentina	judge	la	jueza
Argentina	poet	la	poetisa
Argentina	president	la	presidenta
Argentina	president	la	presidente
Spain	councillor	la	concejal
Spain	councillor	la	concejala
Spain	judge	la	juez
Spain	judge	la	jueza
Spain	poet	la	poeta
Spain	president	la	presidenta

Table 7: Occurrences of multiple Spanish feminisations, by country

Table 6 shows that *maire* is the only word found for a female mayor in the data from Reunion Island but *mairesse* is the word found in all the Canadian

instances. In Canada, the word for sergeant occurs both in feminised form, using a feminine determiner, and in the base form with a masculine determiner. In both cases, searches for further Canadian references were later performed to determine whether the corpus represents common usage, and these are described in Chapter 5.

Table 7 shows that none of the Spanish data with multiple feminisations uses the masculine determiner in the reference. In Argentina, councillors are referred to by the common noun *concejal* but in Spain this is sometimes feminised to *concejala*. Similarly, the Argentine data consistently shows *jueza* for a female judge but in Spain both *juez* and *jueza* can be seen. Further investigation of the agentives *concejal* and *juez*, to determine whether the corpus references available are actually to different roles, is required and will be described in Chapter 5.

Continuing with the Spanish data, the word *poetisa* is found in Argentina but not in Spain. Previous researchers (e.g. Calero Fernández 2004a) have suggested that the word *poetisa* has overtones of hobbyism and is not used in Spain (this will be discussed further in section 5.5.2). Additionally, the UN guidelines for French, English and Spanish all list the locally equivalent suffix (e.g. -ess in English) as historical and dispreferred. A further search was required to determine whether this usage is common in Argentina and will be described in Chapter 5.

### 3.4.2.2. Gender mismatches between determiner and sex of referent

On the issue of determiners agreeing with either the sex of the referent or the grammatical gender of the noun, Table 8 shows all ‘non-natural’ examples of determiner gender found in the initial data collection:

Item	Country	Det	Agentive	Holder	Sex	English job
1	Canada	le	sergent	Hélène Nepton	f	sergeant
2	Canada	le	soprano	Maria Knapik	f	soprano
3	Canada	le	témoin	Stéphanie Morel	f	witness
4	Canada	le	chancelier	Huguette Labelle	f	chancellor
5	Canada	la	chef de la diplomatie	Lawrence Cannon	m	head diplomat
6	Canada	la	vedette	Jean-Marc Barr	m	star
7	Spain	el	escultora	Doris Salcedo	f	sculptor
8	Spain	la	republicana	Judd Gregg	m	republican
9	Spain	el	republicano	Judd Gregg	m	republican
10	Spain	la	nadadora	Ouyang Kunpeng	m	swimmer

Table 8: Mismatches between natural and grammatical gender in the determiner

In Table 8, entries (8) and (9) refer to the same individual who has an unusual first name, and it is assumed that the reference to him in the feminine was a simple mistake by the journalist. It is worth noting, in contrast, that the person in entry (1) is referred to in different articles using the same phraseology, suggesting this is not simply a typographical error and so this individual, along with the person from item (4), will be investigated in detail in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.2.2.1.1 for a discussion of Hélène Nepton and Section 5.4.1.1 for Huguette Labelle). Similarly, the agentives in entries (3) and (6) will be reviewed in Chapter 5, as they are illustrative of some wider issues associated with the



grammatical gender of the determiner in French (see Section 5.3.1.2). Item (2) will be revisited in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.2.3).

Items (5), (7) and (10) in Table 8 are again taken to be typographical errors associated with given names unfamiliar to a journalist native in a different language from that of the referent. Item (10) is particularly amusing, as it is from a report on a men's swimming final, but item (5) is quite understandable as a mistake by a French author, as the phonetically- and graphically similar *Laurence* is a female given-name in the French-speaking world, with *Laurent* being the male equivalent. In item (7) the journalist appears to be hedging bets on the gender of the sculptor *Doris*: no other Spanish language items were found where the grammatical gender of the determiner and that of the referent were different, hence this example will be included in 'typographical errors' for the present, though further discussion of determiner gender in Spanish will be presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

### 3.4.3. Full list of matched agentives

The full list of matched agentives, by language and number of occurrences, is given in Table 9. Items marked in bold have more named women than named men in the role.

Language	English agentive	Men	Women	Difference count for men vs. women
French	actor	5	2	3
French	bassist	7	1	6
French	cellist	1	1	0
French	champion	2	1	1
French	chancellor	3	1	2
French	chieftain	3	1	2
French	choreographer	2	2	0

Language	English agentive	Men	Women	Difference count for men vs. women
French	clarinettist	2	1	1
French	commissioner	8	2	6
French	composer	2	1	1
French	cook	1	1	0
French	coroner	1	1	0
French	councillor	11	7	4
French	director general	8	2	6
French	fashion designer	1	1	0
French	film director	14	2	12
French	god	2	1	1
French	head teacher	3	2	1
French	journalist	6	5	1
French	judge	16	4	12
French	king	6	6	0
French	lieutenant colonel	2	1	1
French	mayor	29	7	22
French	member of parliament	16	6	10
French	minister	31	12	19
French	Olympic champion	2	1	1
French	photographer	1	1	0
French	pianist	16	3	13
French	playwright	1	1	0
French	police officer	4	1	3
French	president	59	1	58
French	<b>prince</b>	1	3	-2
French	prosecutor	3	1	2
French	rapper	5	3	2
French	senator	7	2	5
French	sergeant	3	3	0
French	singer	11	9	2
French	<b>spokesperson</b>	4	7	-3
French	<b>star</b>	1	2	-1
French	violinist	3	3	0
French	witness	1	1	0

Language	English agentive	Men	Women	Difference count for men vs. women
Spanish	actor	42	41	1
Spanish	alpinist	3	1	2
Spanish	ambassador	7	3	4
Spanish	announcer	2	1	1
Spanish	architect	30	3	27
Spanish	artist	12	6	6
Spanish	assembly member	2	2	0
Spanish	astronaut	3	2	1
Spanish	athlete	5	4	1
Spanish	author	2	1	1
Spanish	chancellor	5	1	4
Spanish	Christian democrat	3	1	2
Spanish	comedian	2	1	1
Spanish	corporal	2	2	0
Spanish	councillor	13	4	9
Spanish	counsellor	12	7	5
Spanish	critic	3	2	1
Spanish	<b>dancer</b>	2	8	-6
Spanish	designer	4	2	2
Spanish	dissident Peronist	3	1	2
Spanish	doctor	43	11	32
Spanish	editor	5	2	3
Spanish	emperor	3	1	2
Spanish	impresario	39	3	36
Spanish	federal judge	8	1	7
Spanish	federal prosecutor	2	1	1
Spanish	film director	23	5	18
Spanish	film director 1 <sup>36</sup>	6	2	4
Spanish	film maker	17	4	13

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<sup>36</sup> Note that where synonyms were present in the corpus for French or Spanish agentives but only a single English translation was available, the English word was numbered to distinguish between the synonyms.

Language	English agentive	Men	Women	Difference count for men vs. women
Spanish	film producer	7	2	5
Spanish	flamenco dancer	1	1	0
Spanish	folk singer	1	1	0
Spanish	golfer	12	1	11
Spanish	governor	9	1	8
Spanish	<b>gymnast</b>	1	2	-1
Spanish	holder	2	1	1
Spanish	<b>investigator</b>	1	2	-1
Spanish	journalist	36	13	23
Spanish	judge	59	21	38
Spanish	king	10	1	9
Spanish	legislator	7	2	5
Spanish	liberal	2	1	1
Spanish	magistrate	28	2	26
Spanish	manager	3	1	2
Spanish	mayor	16	4	12
Spanish	member of ETA	4	1	3
Spanish	member of the labour party	3	1	2
Spanish	member of the PNV	13	4	9
Spanish	member of the PP	33	4	29
Spanish	minister	13	11	2
Spanish	<b>model</b>	1	10	-9
Spanish	monk	3	2	1
Spanish	nationalist	10	1	9
Spanish	newcomer	2	1	1
Spanish	newcomer	1	1	0
Spanish	owner	1	1	0
Spanish	pivot	25	1	24
Spanish	parliamentarian	5	5	0
Spanish	Peronist	3	2	1
Spanish	philosopher	4	1	3
Spanish	photographer	19	1	18
Spanish	physicist	6	1	5

Language	English agentive	Men	Women	Difference count for men vs. women
Spanish	playwright	3	2	1
Spanish	poet	15	3	12
Spanish	police officer	2	1	1
Spanish	political scientist	2	1	1
Spanish	politician	5	1	4
Spanish	president	44	7	37
Spanish	prince	2	2	0
Spanish	professor	10	1	9
Spanish	progressive	4	1	3
Spanish	prosecutor	47	4	43
Spanish	psychiatrist	2	2	0
Spanish	psychologist	3	1	2
Spanish	publicist	4	1	3
Spanish	radical	9	1	8
Spanish	republican	4	1	3
Spanish	scientist	7	1	6
Spanish	screen writer	2	1	1
Spanish	sculptor	9	1	8
Spanish	senator	18	7	11
Spanish	singer	16	14	2
Spanish	socialist	50	3	47
Spanish	soldier	1	1	0
Spanish	solicitor	44	6	38
Spanish	specialist	4	2	2
Spanish	spokesperson	6	4	2
Spanish	spokesperson 1	2	2	0
Spanish	<b>student</b>	1	3	-2
Spanish	swimmer	4	1	3
Spanish	teacher	31	5	26
Spanish	tennis player	10	4	6
Spanish	town councillor	9	3	6
Spanish	treasurer	2	1	1
Spanish	vice president	14	2	12
Spanish	witness	2	1	1

<b>Language</b>	<b>English agentive</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Difference count for men vs. women</b>
Spanish	writer	59	11	48

Table 9: Matched job titles by language giving number of named individuals (men and women) and the difference between the number of men and the number of women.

The items in bold in Table 9 have more named women than named men in the role. These are: prince(ss); spokesperson, star, dancer, gymnast, model, student and investigator. Tables 10 and 11, respectively, show the gendered form of the words used in French and Spanish for the matched professions, though see also Table 5 for agentives with multiple feminisations.

<b>English profession</b>	<b>Male profession</b>	<b>Female profession</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
actor	comédien	comédienne	2	5
bassist	bassiste	bassiste	1	7
cellist	violoncelliste	violoncelliste	1	1
champion	champion	championne	1	2
chancellor	chancelier	chancelière	1	3
chieftain	chef	chef	1	3
choreographer	chorégraphe	chorégraphe	2	2
clarinettist	clarinettiste	clarinettiste	1	2
commissioner	commissaire	commissaire	2	8
composer	compositeur	compositrice	1	2
cook	cuisinier	cuisinière	1	1
coroner	coroner	coroner	1	1
councillor	conseiller	conseillère	7	11
director general	directeur général	directrice générale	2	9
fashion designer	créateur de mode	créatrice de mode	1	1
film director	réalisateur	réalisatrice	2	14
god	dieu	déesse	1	2
head teacher	principal	principale	2	3

English profession	Male profession	Female profession	Women	Men
journalist	journaliste	journaliste	5	6
judge	juge	juge	4	16
king	roi	reine	6	6
lieutenant colonel	lieutenant-colonel	lieutenant-colonel	1	2
mayor	maire	maire	6	29
member of parliament	député	députée	6	16
minister	ministre	ministre	12	31
Olympic champion	champion olympique	championne olympique	1	2
photographer	photographe	photographe	1	1
pianist	pianiste	pianiste	3	16
playwright	dramaturge	dramaturge	1	1
police officer	policier	policière	1	4
president	président	présidente	1	58
prince	prince	princesse	3	1
prosecutor	procureur	procureure	1	3
rapper	rappeur	rappeuse	3	5
senator	sénateur	sénatrice	2	7
sergeant	sergent	sergent	3	3
singer	chanteur	chanteuse	9	11
spokesperson	porte-parole	porte-parole	7	4
star	vedette	star <sup>37</sup>	2	1

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<sup>37</sup> The only reference found in French to a female celebrity was for Marion Cotillard, described as ‘*la star française Marion*’ [the (f) French (f) star Marion Cotillard] in an article from *Libération.fr*. The word encountered here is obviously not a feminisation of *vedette* but an anglicism. However, additional citations of ‘*la star*’ [the (f) star] for male referents were encountered: for example, to the footballer Dani Güiza in *L’Equipe* (<http://www.lequipe.fr/Football/Actualites/Le-real-se-mefie-d-aduriz/105552> accessed 1st June 2014). Various URLs did, however, used ‘*vedette*’ in the feminine to reference women, .e.g. <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/arts/vie-de-stars/201005/05/01-4277558-des-admiratrices-de-justin->

<b>English profession</b>	<b>Male profession</b>	<b>Female profession</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
violinist	violoniste	violoniste	3	3
witness	témoin	témoin	1	1

Table 10: Gendered profession vocabulary in French

<b>English profession</b>	<b>Male profession</b>	<b>Female profession</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
actor	actor	actriz	41	42
alpinist	alpinista	alpinista	1	3
ambassador	embajador	embajadora	3	7
announcer	locutor	locutora	1	2
architect	arquitecto	arquitecta	3	30
artist	artista	artista	6	12
assembly member	asambleísta	asambleísta	2	2
astronaut	astronauta	astronauta	2	3
athlete	atleta	atleta	4	5
author	autor	autora	1	2
chancellor	canciller	canciller	1	5
Christian democrat	democristiano	democristiana	1	3
comedian	humorista	humorista	1	2
corporal	cabo	cabo	2	2
councillor	concejal	concejal	4	13
counsellor	consejero	consejera	7	12
critic	crítico	crítica	2	3
dancer	bailarín	bailarina	8	2
designer	diseñador	diseñadora	2	4
dissident Peronist	peronista disidente	peronista disidente	1	3
doctor	doctor	doctora	11	43
editor	editor	editora	2	5
emperor	emperador	emperatriz	1	3
impresario	empresario	empresaria	3	39
federal judge	juez federal	jueza federal	1	8

[bieber-menacent-une-vedette-de-telerealite.php](http://bieber-menacent-une-vedette-de-telerealite.php) (accessed 1st June 2014) [admirers (f) of Justin Bieber threaten a (f) reality TV star].



<b>English profession</b>	<b>Male profession</b>	<b>Female profession</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
federal prosecutor	fiscal federal	fiscal federal	1	2
film director	director	directora	7	29
film maker	cineasta	cineasta	4	17
film producer	productor	productora	2	7
flamenco dancer	bailaor	bailaora	1	1
folk singer	payador	tonadillera	1	1
golfer	golfista	golfista	1	12
governor	gobernador	gobernadora	1	9
gymnast	gimnasta	gimnasta	2	1
holder	titular	titular	1	2
investigator	investigador	investigadora	2	1
journalist	periodista	periodista	13	36
judge	juez	juez	21	59
king	rey	reina	1	10
legislator	legislador	legisladora	2	7
liberal*	liberal	liberal	1	2
magistrate	magistrado	magistrada	2	28
manager	gerente	gerente	1	3
mayor	alcalde	alcaldesa	4	26
member of eta*	etarra	etarra	1	4
member of the labour party	laborista	laborista	1	3
member of the PNV	peneuvista	peneuvista	4	13
member of the PP*	popular	popular	4	33
minister	ministro	ministra	11	13
model	modelo	modelo	10	1
nationalist	nacionalista	nacionalista	1	10
newcomer	debutante	debutante	1	2
newcomer	novato	novata	1	1
owner	dueño	dueña	1	1
parliamentarian	parlamentario	parlamentaria	5	5
pivot (in rugby)	pívot	pívot	1	25
Peronist	peronista	peronista	2	3
philosopher	filósofo	filósofa	1	4

<b>English profession</b>	<b>Male profession</b>	<b>Female profession</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
photographer	fotógrafo	fotógrafa	1	19
(astro)physicist	(astro)físico	(astro)física	1	6
playwright	dramaturgo	dramaturga	2	3
poet	poeta	poeta	3	15
police officer	agente	agente	1	2
political scientist	político	política	1	2
politician	político	política	1	5
president	presidente	presidenta	7	44
prince	príncipe	princesa	2	2
professor	catedrático	catedrática	1	11
progressive	progresista	progresista	1	4
prosecutor	fiscal	fiscal	4	47
psychiatrist	psiquiatra	psiquiatra	2	2
psychologist	psicólogo	psicóloga	1	3
publicist	publicista	publicista	1	4
radical*	radical	radical	1	9
republican	republicana	republicana	1	4
scientist	científico	científica	1	7
screen writer	guionista	guionista	1	2
sculptor	escultor	escultora	1	9
senator	senador	senadora	7	18
singer	cantante	cantante	14	16
socialist	socialista	socialista	3	50
soldier	soldado	soldado	1	1
solicitor	abogado	abogada	6	44
specialist	especialista	especialista	2	4
spokesperson	portavoz	portavoz	6	8
student	estudiante	estudiante	3	1
swimmer	nadador	nadadora	1	4
teacher	profesor	docente	8	31
tennis player	tenista	tenista	4	10
town councillor	edil	edil	3	9
treasurer	tesorero	tesorera	1	2
vice president	vicepresidente	vicepresidenta	2	14

<b>English profession</b>	<b>Male profession</b>	<b>Female profession</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
witness	testigo	testigo	1	2
writer	escritor	escritora	11	59

Table 11: Gendered profession vocabulary in Spanish

\* In Spanish, but not in French, some adjectives are also used as agentives<sup>38</sup>.

The next section will describe how the agentives appearing in Tables 10 and 11 were classified for further analysis.

### 3.4.4. Data classification

As can be seen from the data reproduced in Tables 10 and 11, the agentives collected for the corpus fall into disparate categories, covering sporting, political, professional and even peripheral roles, the latter including, for example, 'witness'. To enable quantitative analysis of the agentives from a social, as well as linguistic, perspective, these items were collated and grouped together based on similarity. After creating the groupings, a title was sought for each and a description written to explain inclusion of the group's members and the rationale for considering them similar. The groupings are presented in Table 12, and the group members listed in Table 13.

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
Art	Producers of art: artists, painters, sculptors.
Drama	Dramatic artists and producers, directors or authors of dramatic works.

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<sup>38</sup> A small number of adjectives are present as agentives in the Spanish data. Usually these appear to be shorthand for 'member of' (e.g. in the case of ETA or the PP) though they are sometimes used for more generic allegiances such as being 'liberal' or 'radical' in one's politics. See also table 26 in section 5.4.1.2 for a further discussion of the presence of adjectives in the corpus.

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
Government	In the democratic countries selected for data analysis, this primarily includes elected positions such as mayor, member of parliament and ministers.
Lay	This category was used for non-professional roles such as the witnesses in a court case. The agentives in this category do not have a homogeneous role though equally they are only fleetingly held by the referent, e.g. in the context of one incident such as a traffic accident or a court case.
Management	The management category included professional management positions, such as CEO
Member of organisation	This category was used for agentives such as 'trade unionist' or 'right-winger', which describe an allegiance rather than a role.
Military	Military titles of all ranks, whether in the armed forces or the police.
Music	Any role describing a member of the music industry, such as an instrumentalist, singer, composer or musical arranger.
Professional	Traditional professions for which long, academic training is required, such as medical doctor or architect.
Public sector	Primarily public employees and law enforcement agents, where their titles are not equivalent to military ones.
Scientist	Those quoted as knowledgeable in a branch of science, such as geologists, physicists or chemists.
Skilled	Those skilled in crafts, usually having served an apprenticeship.
Sport	Individuals referred to by the sport they play, usually at a high level such as Olympic athletes or professional footballers.

Table 12: Expansion of sector classifications made on the agentives retrieved

Table 13 shows how the agentives from the corpus were initially grouped, to then create the categories given in Table 12.

<b>Sector</b>	<b>Agentive</b>
Art	artist, author, comedian, critic, designer, editor, fashion designer, model, photographer, poet, sculptor, writer
Drama	actor, film director (artistic), film maker, playwright, screen writer, star
Government	assembly member, chancellor, chieftain, councillor, emperor, god, governor, king, legislator, mayor, member of

Sector	Agentive
	parliament, minister, parliamentarian, politician, president, prince, senator, government spokesperson, town councillor, treasurer, vice president
Lay	announcer, holder (of a title), newcomer, student, witness
Management	director general, impresario, film director (managing editor), film producer, manager, owner
Member	Christian democrat, dissident Peronist, liberal, member of eta, member of the labour party, member of the PNV, member of the PP, nationalist, Peronist, progressive, radical, republican, socialist, party political spokesperson
Military	corporal, lieutenant colonel, sergeant, soldier
Music	bassist, cellist, choreographer, clarinettist, composer, dancer, flamenco dancer, pianist, rapper, (folk) singer, violinist
Professional	architect, doctor, journalist, psychiatrist, psychologist, publicist, solicitor
Public	ambassador, commissioner, coroner, counsellor, federal judge, federal prosecutor, head teacher, holder (of office), judge, magistrate, police officer, professor, prosecutor, spokesperson, teacher
Scientist	astronaut, investigator, philosopher, (astro)physicist, political scientist, scientist, specialist
Skilled	cook
Sport	alpinist, athlete, champion, golfer, gymnast, Olympic champion, pivot (in rugby), swimmer, tennis player

Table 13: Sector agentives

These sectors will be discussed further during the quantitative analysis, in Chapter 4.

### 3.5. Summary

In this chapter, the base variables for further analysis have been described and their origin presented. The initial corpus creation was described, and this resulted in 41 French agentives and 94 Spanish ones where at least one male and one female referent was found. Entries in this matched dataset were then enriched to include: a grammatical gender prediction, based on the morphological form of the agentive; three flags indicating whether the

feminisation strategy of the agentive, found with a female referent, conformed to the chosen guidelines for non-sexist usage and, finally, a 'sector' classification for each agentive, based on a manual grouping by similarity of role.

These three elements of enrichment will now be used for analysis. In Chapter 4, the data will be analysed quantitatively using classification and regression trees to determine whether the sector, reflecting the societal position of agentives, or the gender-predictive qualities of the agentive's morphology have a greater impact on the guideline discrepancies. Then, in Chapter 5, a qualitative analysis of those data items showing inconsistent feminisations for a single person or agentive will be discussed, taking the data from tables 5, 6 and 7 as the source.

## **4. Chapter 4. Quantitative Analysis of the Collated Corpus**

Over time this became orthodoxy: feminists use qualitative methods.  
(Hughes & Cohen 2010:190)

### **4.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter described the corpus collection process and resultant data to be used in the study. In this chapter, the quantitative analysis carried out on this data is detailed and the results are shown and discussed. Firstly, a description and review of the statistical method will be given, showing how this technique has been applied in other contexts and why it was chosen for the current study. The remainder of the chapter will show how the method was applied to the corpus data and the results obtained.

### **4.2. Classification and regression trees**

The corpus data described in Chapter 3 was subjected to a classification and regression tree analysis using the statistical package R, based on suggested computations by Baayen (2008).

Classification and regression trees were independently refined by Breiman and Friedman in the 1970s, building on earlier computer techniques developed at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research. The two later collaborated and were joined by Stone, and later Olshen, to produce the first edition of their text 'Classification and Regression Trees' in the early 1980s (Breiman, Friedman, Olshen, & Stone 1993:ix). Descriptions of the technique given here are sourced from this work and the overview of the technique provided by Baayen (2008:148-154).

### **4.2.1. Overview of technique**

Classification and regression is a binary technique, taking a data set and, for each item within it, attempting to deduce the strongest factors influencing its structure. This results in a path through the dataset that branches each time the influencing factors diverge, placing those that are strongly influenced by a factor on one side and the remainder on the other. The exact nature of these factors is determined by partitioning the data into homogeneous sets, the smallest possible set therefore being a single element of the input data. However, such a detailed classification would not help the researcher in understanding their data, so the algorithm used to produce the tree will stop at a certain minimum number of elements. Within this minimum number of elements, the factor chosen to split them must result in each of the two child nodes being opposites of each other: i.e. the ratio of what is being compared must be significantly greater on one side and smaller on the other. Repeated tests are performed to find the most appropriate data splits, and the final tree will show only the most significant divisions within the data.

Breiman et al. stress the versatility of their statistical technique particularly in small data samples, like those typically available in clinical work. The classification technique, unthinkable before the 1980s when computer power began to increase exponentially, requires iterative t-tests and chi-tests to be performed on subsets of the data sample, until a 'best fit' is found that explains the remaining data based on this sample. The initial tree can later be 'pruned' to ensure only the strongest relationships are retained. (Breiman et al. 1993).

Within *R*, the selection and classification process is repeated on different random samplings until the most statistically significant match is found. Items



that are not influential in all runs can then be discarded to simplify the tree, retaining only the most influential factors (Baayen 2008).

The advantage of this technique over more traditional statistical methods using the normal distribution is that it allows large numbers of factors to be entered in the analysis and will then point the researcher to those that are having the biggest influence on the results being seen. The next section will review examples of research using this technique, which is more commonly seen in the medical and psychological fields than in linguistics.

#### **4.2.2. Research examples using this technique**

This section describes prior research using the method chosen for statistical analysis on the corpus data. The research described here is from a non-linguistic context.

Classification and regression analysis is frequently used to make sense of multiple, potential influencing factors in clinical and psychological research. For example, Compton, Fuchs, Fuchs and Bryant (2006) used classification trees to aid in identifying children at risk of reading disabilities. Their study involved 206 students and analysed multiple risk factors in order to create a predictive model of those likely to require additional help with reading, thus allowing available educational resources to be targeted effectively at those most in need. Using the technique developed by Breiman et al. (1993), a decision tree was produced showing children either at risk or not at risk of reading failure, and showing the factors that had the most impact on this binary choice.

In a particular tree test of just 58 children, the score levels from reading and other similar tests were classified into three categories, A, B and C, where a score of 83.35 on category A, 37.5 for C and between 10.25 and 53.75 for B

selects 81% of the student sample who are at risk, and therefore suggests these score results are predictive. In future, their results suggest, children should be considered at risk of experiencing reading difficulties if they achieve this type of test result.

Breiman et al. describe in detail the use of classification trees in the analysis of risk in heart attack victims admitted to hospital emergency rooms (Breiman et al. 1993). Numerous factors, blood pressure for example, were measured on admission and the survival rates of the patients were then classified against these initial features. The statistical process of classification trees was able to highlight the most significant of the many available factors, so that clinical care could later be prioritised according to the highest risk factors (Breiman et al. 1993:4). The total sample for the heart attack patients used for analysis was under 215, with the initial number of factors analysed being 19, though each of these 19 factors admitted a large range of values, such as the patient's age or blood pressure.

These two examples show that classification and regression trees are primarily used as a highlighting technique, to show which factors, out of a large set of potential variables, are the most likely to influence a result. In both of the examples given, the researcher wants to prioritise resources and therefore needs to identify which variables – or which ranges within a single variable – have the biggest impact on the sample as a whole. The technique is providing the researcher with a method of filtering out variables, or variable ranges, so that less important data features can be, at least temporarily, ignored.

### **4.2.3. Applicability to the current study**

As discussed above, classification and regression trees are a useful technique for filtering out the less significant variables or variable ranges in a complex data set, as shown in the example given by Breiman et al. (1993), used to reduce the factors needed to assess risk in clinical admissions for heart attack victims. Additionally, they can be applied to relatively small samples of data, as illustrated by the 58 test subject sample used in the tree produced by Compton et al. (2006). For the current study, classification and regression techniques will be used to highlight areas for more detailed, qualitative analysis. The technique will also provide guidance on whether it is morphological or social factors which have the greater influence on feminisation anomalies identified within the corpus.

Within the corpus collected for analysis in the present study, only small numbers of distinct items are available: 94 gender-matched Spanish words and 41 for French (see Table 4 on page 76). These agentives have little in common, as they were pulled from real news reports over a fixed period of time. They have since been grouped, based on similarity of function which has given 13 'sectors' (see Tables 12 and 13) in addition to the two languages and 4 countries of the original data extraction. Additionally, 3 grammatical feminisation issues have been identified, using the UN guidelines for non-sexist writing in French and Spanish: absence of grammatical feminisation; use of non-recommended feminisations, and determiner usage that ignores the referent's 'natural' gender. Finally, a 'predicted grammatical gender' has been added for each masculine lexeme to allow 'ease of feminisation' to be judged.

Using a data-driven approach, these factors can now be treated using classification and regression tree analysis in order to identify significant relationships between them, pointing the way forward for a more detailed, qualitative analysis of the corpus data in Chapter 5.

### **4.3. Quantitative analysis and results**

This section describes how the data from the corpus was collated for use within the statistical package *R* and what results were obtained from the analysis.

#### **4.3.1. Data inputs**

The raw corpus data had already been enriched by adding a 'sector' value, as per the list given in Table 12. To improve the homogeneity of the data set, additional information was added to the corpus entries to track particular choices made in the data collation. These additional data elements, added to the information extracted from MySQL database tables as the data was loaded into *R*, are described in this section.

A MySQL database was used to store the entire dataset of agentives, as described in Chapter 3. The available information included the sex of the referent, the grammatical gender of the agentive's determiner in the original news article, the agentive's form, the corresponding word form found elsewhere to refer to males in the same role and an English translation of the agentive. The sector, as shown in Table 13, and the three 'anomaly' flags, added after comparison with the UN guidelines, were also available, in addition to the initial corpus extraction information which include the country, language and source publication of the agentive instance. The MySQL database table was now queried to extract both detailed and summary-level data sets for input to *R*.

Extracting only the data items which referred to women, some agentives did not exhibit locally paired male referents: for example, a female mayor may have been found in Canada but no male Canadian referents with the equivalent agentive. In such cases, since the masculine term was always considered to be primary in these cases (i.e. no predominantly female professions, such as 'nurse', occurred in this context) the standard 'masculine' agentive was taken from the language data of a different country but the data row was flagged as 'cross-country' in the dataset so that this decision could later be revised, if necessary. During this process, it became clear that the data from Reunion Island was not required for the analysis, as matching lexemes from France and Canada were available.

Table 14, below, shows the information made available to *R* in the dataset entitled *SummaryFem*, created by the extract of female referents from the corpus data, as just described:

Data attribute	Description
Language	Source language (French or Spanish)
Country	Source country (France, Canada, Reunion Island, Argentina or Spain)
BaseMasculine	Masculine version of the agentive, possibly from a different country
FeminineReferent	Feminine version of the agentive, as found in the source country
Gender	Predicted grammatical gender, based on word form (M/F/A <sup>39</sup> )
WordForm	Classification of the word form based on its ending <sup>40</sup>
FemReqIgnored	UN requirement to feminise ignored (yes/no)
FemFormIgnored	UN feminisation structure ignored (yes/no)
MaleDet	Masculine determiner used for female referent (yes/no) <sup>41</sup>
Xcty	Cross-country data (masculine noun not encountered in same location)
Sector	Classification by sector, as listed in Table 13
engprof	English translation of the agentive, in base masculine form
pub	Source publication (e.g. Le Monde, El País)
det	Actual determiner used in original article
name	Name of referent

Table 14: items available from initial data collection and added to *R* as dataset *SummaryFem*.

For example, the three female sergeants available in the Canadian section of the data collection have the *SummaryFem* entries shown below in Table 15:

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<sup>39</sup> Where 'A' denotes that the word form is not strongly gendered masculine or feminine.

<sup>40</sup> Using Lyster (2006) for French and a combination of Bergen (1978) and Teschner (1983) for Spanish, as described in Chapter 2 (see section 2.4.3).

<sup>41</sup> Note that only one instance of a male referent with feminine determiner was found in the corpus: see Table 8, entry 6 in section 3.4.2.2, which will be discussed further in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2.

<b>SummaryFem attribute</b>	<b>Entry (1)</b>	<b>Entry (2)</b>	<b>Entry (3)</b>
Language	French	French	French
Country	Canada	Canada	Canada
BaseMasculine	sergent	sergent	sergent
FeminineReferent	sergente	sergente	sergent
Gender	M	M	M
WordForm	-ent	-ent	-ent
FemReqlgnored	no	no	yes
FemFormIgnored	no	no	no
MaleDet	no	no	yes
Xcty	no	no	no
Sector	Military	Military	Military
engprof	sergeant	sergeant	sergeant
pub	Le Soleil	Le Nouvelliste	Le Nouvelliste
det	La	La	Le
Name	Julie Martel	Éloïse Cossette	Hélène Nepton

Table 15: example of data row for *SummaryFem*.

This data set was then further summarised to remove the publisher, determiner and name leaving unique examples of agentives found referring to women. The resultant data entries were loaded into *R* as dataset *FlaggedForR*, shown in

Table 16:

<b>Data attribute</b>	<b>Description</b>
language	Source language (French or Spanish)
country	Source country (France, Canada, Reunion Island, Argentina or Spain)
BaseMasculine	Masculine noun
FeminineReferent	Feminine version of the noun found in the source country
Gender	Predicted grammatical gender, based on word form (M/F/A)
WordForm	Classification of the word form based on its ending
FemReqlIgnored	UN requirement to feminise ignored (yes/no)
FemFormIgnored	UN feminisation structure ignored (yes/no)
MaleDet	Masculine determiner used for female referent (yes/no)
xcty	Cross-country data (masculine noun not encountered in same location)
sector	Classification by sector
engprof	English translation of the base masculine

Table 16: summarised data, excluding publication and individual's name

For example, the entries (1) and (2) from Table 15 now become a single entry in the summary set, *FlaggedForR* as shown in Table 17, below:

<b>FlaggedForR attribute</b>	<b>SummaryFem Entries (1/2)</b>	<b>SummaryFem Entry (3)</b>
Language	French	French
Country	Canada	Canada
BaseMasculine	sergent	sergent
FeminineReferent	sergente	sergente
Gender	M	M
WordForm	-ent	-ent
FemReqlIgnored	no	yes
FemFormIgnored	no	no
MaleDet	no	yes
Xcty	no	no
Sector	Military	Military
engprof	sergeant	sergeant

Table 17: example of data in set *FlaggedForR*



### 4.3.2. Classification and regression tree production

The data described in the *inputs* section, above, was then processed in *R* to produce tree diagrams with the intention of highlighting the closely related source features and effects. This section shows the tree diagrams produced, interprets them and describes the refinements then made to discard features until only the most significant data elements remained for later qualitative analysis.

#### 4.3.2.1. Analysing SummaryFem by sector

In the initial instance, the data described in Table 14 as *SummaryFem*, and exemplified in Table 15, was analysed by sector to produce the diagram shown in Figure 1.

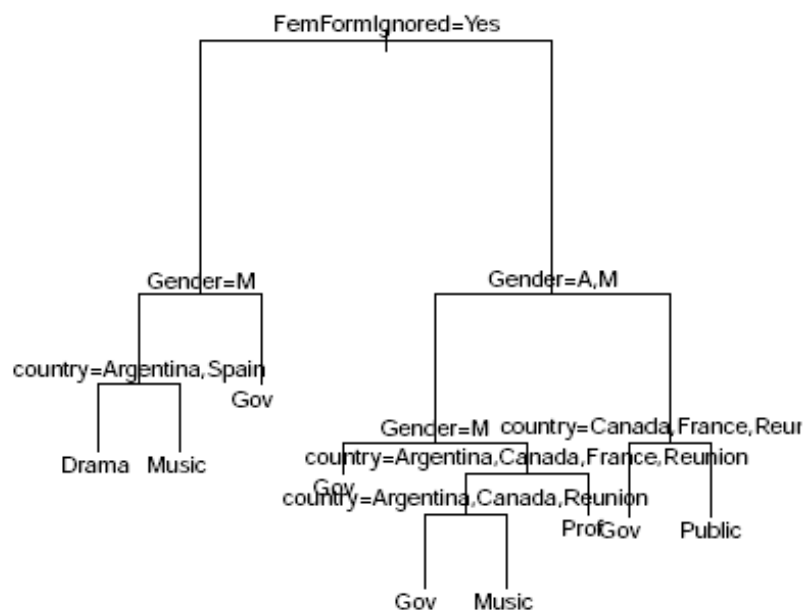


Figure 1: tree showing influences controlling feminisation by sector

Figure 1 shows an increasingly complex tree, read from top to bottom, where, at each level, the items in the left branch are those most closely linked to the label at their parent node and the items in the right branch are less related to it.

In Figure 1, the highest node is labelled 'FemFormIgnored = Yes'. This means that 'FemFormIgnored = Yes' associates with the items to its left and, as ignoring feminisation is a binary value within the data set, 'FemFormIgnored = No' associates with items on the right.

On the left hand side, the items associated with 'FemFormIgnored = Yes' then subdivide based on the predictable gender of their word form being masculine (Gender = 'M') and finally by country, resulting in a selection of sectors. This is illustrated in Table 18, below:

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Sector</b>
Not M (i.e. A/F)		Gov
M	Spain/Argentina (i.e. Spanish-speaking)	Drama
M	Not Spain/Argentina (i.e. French-speaking)	Music

Table 18: Expansion of left branch of Figure 1.

Table 18, the expansion of the left-hand branch of Figure 1, shows that where the predictable gender is not masculine – i.e., the predictable gender is either feminine or grammatical gender cannot be predicted at all based on the particular word form – there is a close association with the sector 'Government'. Reading from the top of the diagram to this point, one can say that the tree is showing an association between the sector 'Government', the predictable grammatical gender of the base agentive *not* being masculine and a lack of feminisation for the agentives in this subset of the corpus, amongst others. It is to be noted that this effect is not strongly influenced by the language or country of the data item but only by its values for predictable gender and sector. This

initially suggests a link between the three features: sector, predictable gender of the word form and feminisation strategies differing from those recommended in the UN guidelines.

The branch shown in Table 18 under 'Gender = M', exhibits a dependency on country. For 'Country = Argentina, Spain' (co-incidentally, equivalent to 'Language = Spanish') sector 'Drama' is given as a dependency and for other countries (i.e. French-speaking ones) the sector 'Music'. This suggests that the data for Spanish speaking countries associates predictable gender being masculine and sector 'Drama' with the recommended word form for grammatical feminisation being ignored. Similarly for the remaining (French-speaking) countries, the sector 'Music' and predictable gender being masculine are associated with the recommended feminisation form being ignored.

The right-hand branch of Figure 1, where feminisation form is as suggested in the UN guidelines, is much more complex and suggests no close links between the lower levels of data, as multiple, complex child branches then occur. Figure 1 can, however, be cropped to give a more statistically significant picture by applying cost-complexity pruning (cp) and this was then performed in an attempt to clarify the data available on the right-hand side of the main branch. The cost-complexity plot, again created using suggestions from Baayen (2008:150) is shown in Figure 2:

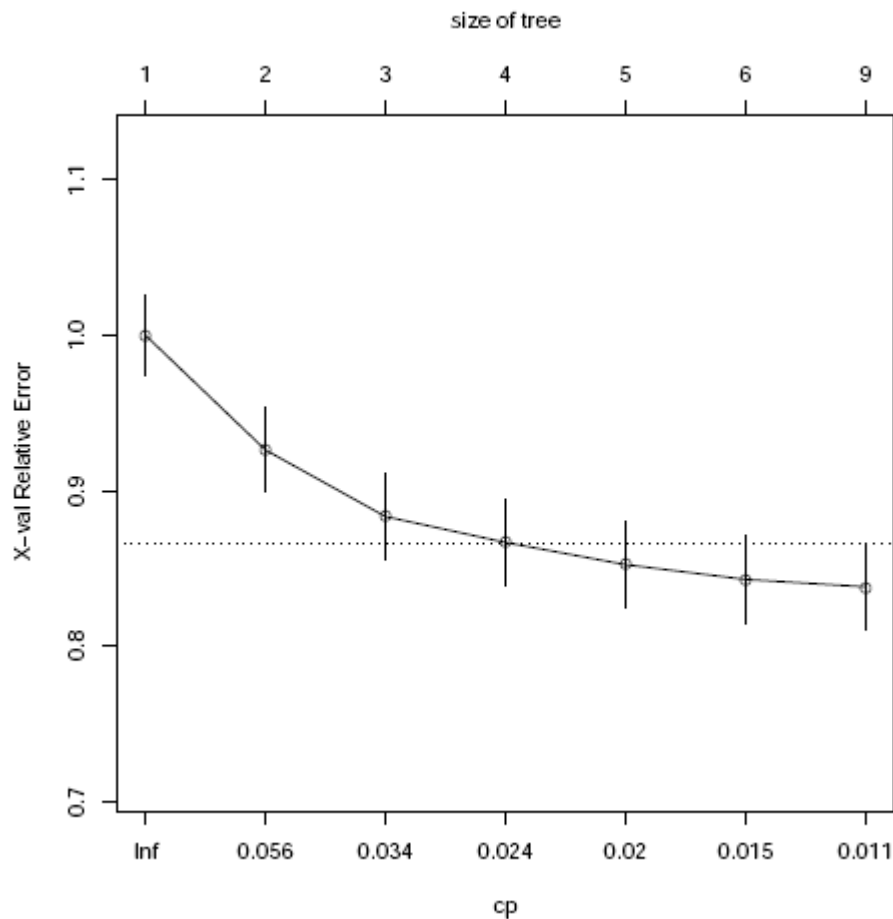


Figure 2, cost-complexity plot for Figure 1

To create the cost-complexity plot, the data is randomly split into 10 equal sets, thus described by Baayen as a '10-fold cross-validation' (Baayen 2008:150). The larger the value of  $cp$ , on the x-axis in Figure 2, the more branches are pruned from the original figure, with the number of resulting branches given across the top of Figure 2: hence, a pruning value of 0.015 gives 6 branches; a pruning value of 0.024 gives 4. The relative error score, on the y-axis in Figure 2, quantifies the accuracy of the result obtained for 9 tenths of the data on the remaining tenth, at each level of tree complexity. The values represent the average relative error over the 10 subsets, with the vertical lines inside the graph showing one standard error above or below the mean (Baayen 2008:151). The dotted line is one standard error above the lowest plot, hence it touches the top of the vertical line through the right-most point on the graph.

Baayen says: 'a common selection rule for the cost-complexity parameter is to select the leftmost point that is still under this dotted line' (Baayen 2008:151).

The original tree was therefore re-drawn with four branches by refining the drawing to ignore items where the relativity error factor crosses below the dotted line in Figure 2 (i.e. 0.024). This results in Figure 3:

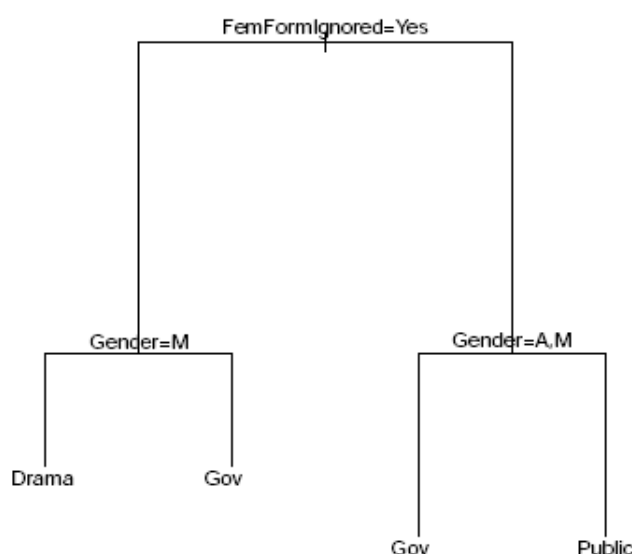


Figure 3: pruned sector plot

Figure 3 shows a simplified division of the data, where the 'Government' sector no longer appears to be influenced by country or language factors but only by the predictable gender of the word form. As well as simplifying the right hand side of Figure 1, the pruned Figure 3 also removes the influence of country on the left-hand side. In Figure 3, 'Government' sector agentives are still associated with non-recommended feminisation forms when the underlying word form is predictably feminine or of unpredictable gender, but the left hand side of this division has now lost the association with language and suggests

that only the 'Drama' sector ignores feminisation forms for predictably masculine word forms.

Reviewing the data for the 'Drama' sector, this appears to be caused by the continued use of the feminised form 'actress' where the suffix -ess is dispreferred in the UN guidelines for all languages which admit it. As this single word is the only guideline discrepancy in the 'Drama' sector, but occurs for both French and Spanish, it is having a disproportionate effect on the graphical result shown in Figure 3.

On the right hand side of Figure 3, predictably feminine 'Public sector' agentives are associated with the feminisations recommended by the UN guidelines, as are predictably masculine or non-predictable agentives in the 'Government' sector. This overlapping result, with predictably masculine 'Government' sector agentives appearing on both sides of the diagram, may be caused by the duplication of individual feminisations as a result of including the referent's name within the dataset. To remove this possible effect, further trees were produced on the summarised data set, *FlaggedForR*, described in Table 17 and exemplified in Table 19.

#### **4.3.2.2. Analysing FlaggedForR by sector**

A second analysis was performed on the dataset that contained only unique feminisations, without the publication, determiner or referent's name. The publication had not appeared in any of the earlier trees, and hence was considered to be less significant in the statistical analysis and therefore safely ignored. The equivalent statistical analyses give the initial results shown in Figure 4, below:

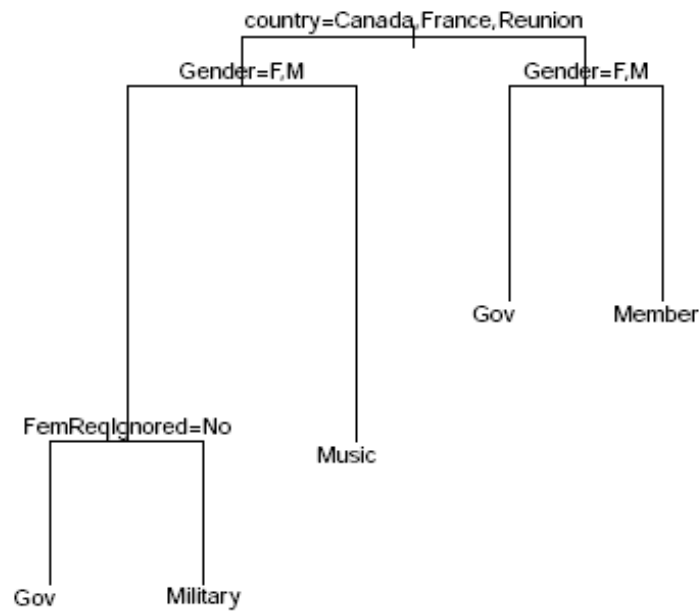


Figure 4, tree of sectors using unique feminisations.

Figure 4 shows only one node where the UN guideline contraventions are involved. It suggests that in the French speaking countries (i.e. Canada, France, Reunion Island as shown in the topmost node) for agentives with predictably gendered word forms (masculine or feminine, as shown in the first left-hand child node) the requirement to feminise the masculine noun is ignored for military positions: the 'military' sector appearing on the right of the subsequent child node labelled 'FemReqIgnored = No', and hence associated with the opposite of this condition.

However, when pruning this diagram, to give Figure 5, this association disappears:

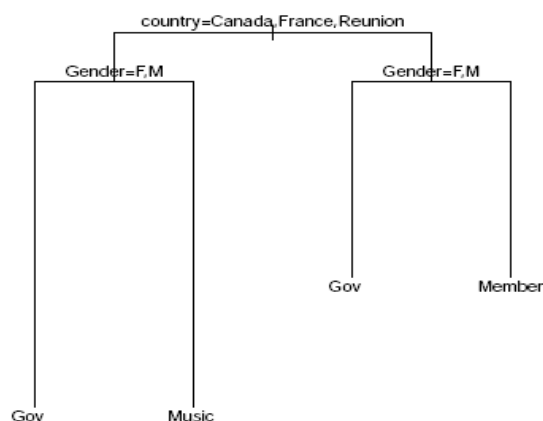


Figure 5: pruned tree of sectors using unique feminisations

Figure 5 shows a top-level division of the data by country, with French-speaking countries on the left and hence Spanish-speaking ones on the right. In both cases, predictably-gendered items in the 'Government' sector appear, but no associations are shown to the guideline-related data items, such as feminine form or determiner gender. This suggests that the government sector agentives found in the corpus are predominantly examples of word forms exhibiting predictable grammatical gender. Conversely, to the other side of the branches, French-speaking countries have non-predictable gender for agentives in the 'Music' sector and Spanish-speaking countries have non-predictable gender for agentives in the sector labelled 'Member'.

To refine these results, which currently show just the classification of particular job sectors by the predictability of their grammatical gender, a subset of *FlaggedForR* was created containing only items where one of the guideline contravention flags was true. Figure 6 shows the tree for this data subset, which contains only entries where an exception had been logged: i.e. the presence of a masculine determiner with a female referent, grammatical feminisation not taking place or the feminisation form not being as suggested.



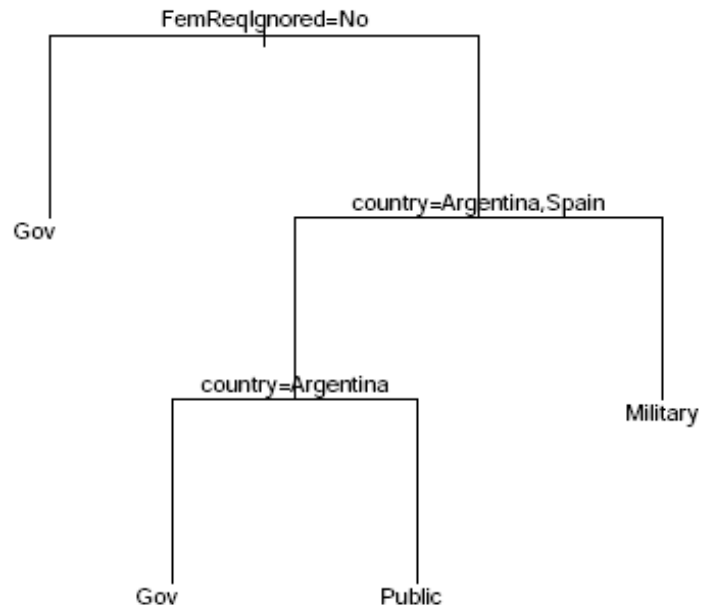


Figure 6: sector tree showing exceptions only

Figure 6 suggests that feminisation generally does takes place for 'Government' sector positions, regardless of country, as these appear on the left hand side of the top node 'FemReqIgnored = No'. However, taking the right-hand side of the diagram after this top node, where 'FemReqIgnored = Yes' is the case, this covers the 'Military' sector in French-speaking countries, as this appears to the right of the next level node, labelled 'Spain, Argentina': i.e. all Spanish-speaking countries are to the left of this label and all French-speaking ones to the right. Of the Spanish-speaking countries, in Argentina, the next level node label, the 'Government' sector appears to the left, hence showing a particular association with feminisation not taking place in that country, and on the right, in Spain, the 'Public' sector shows a similar association.

Analysing the data by sector has suggested some interesting links between particular sectors and guideline non-conformance. In the next section, similar analyses will be carried out using the predictable gender of the word form.

### 4.3.2.3. Analysing FlaggedForR by predictable gender

A second set of analyses was carried out using the same statistical approach but starting from the predictable gender of the agentives' word forms. This second classification, performed to see if the non-conformances to guidelines figure at a purely grammatical level, is described in this section. The first statistical run was performed for the data set *FlaggedForR* and the resulting graph is shown as Figure 7.

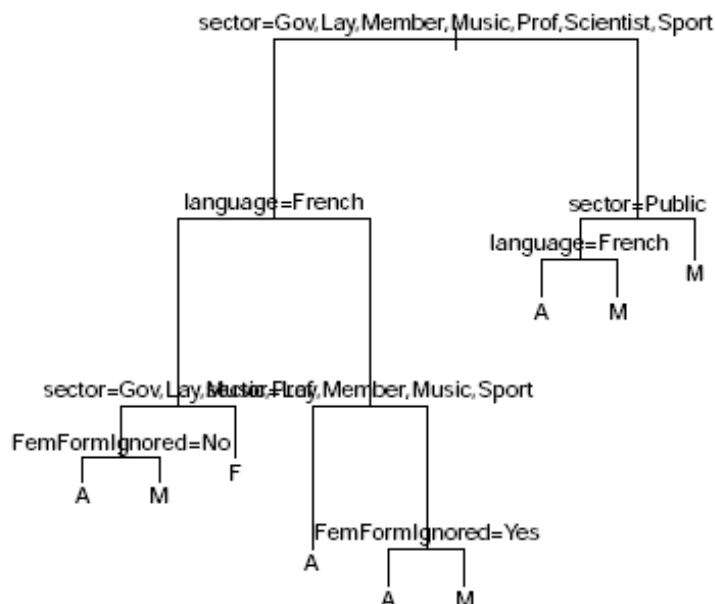


Figure 7: plot of exception data by predicted gender of word form.

Figure 7 begins with a node labelled 'Sector = Gov, Lay, Member, Music, Prof, Scientist, Sport'. The next node on the left-hand side is entitled 'Language = French' so items to the left, below this, are associated with French and those to the right associated with Spanish. The left-hand node below 'French' is labelled 'Sector = Gov, Lay, Music, Prof' and below this the next node is labelled 'FemFormIgnored = No', so the French data in these four sectors conforms to

the guideline recommendations where gender is not predictable, as the next node on the left is labelled 'A' for the grammatical gender of the word form not being predictable. On the right-hand side here, predictably masculine word forms appear, so this suggests that within the four sectors 'Gov, Lay, Music, Prof', French word forms that are predictably masculine are not feminised according to the guideline recommendations.

Turning to the Spanish side of the tree, the next label is for sectors 'Lay, Member, Music, Sport', but the only guideline non-conformance appears at the right-hand side of this label. Since the master node has the sectors ' Gov, Lay, Member, Music, Prof, Scientist, Sport' then the right-hand node here contains the remaining sectors from this higher level set: i.e. 'Gov, Prof, Scientist'. Within these three sectors, and for Spanish-speaking countries, 'FemFormIgnored = Yes' associates with agentives where grammatical gender is not predictable.

Overall, this can be interpreted as saying that the recommended feminisation form is ignored for predictably masculine words in the government, lay, music and professional sectors in French, or for Spanish agentives in sector Government, Professional or Scientific where gender is not predictable. However, pruning Figure 7 according to the plot in Figure 8:

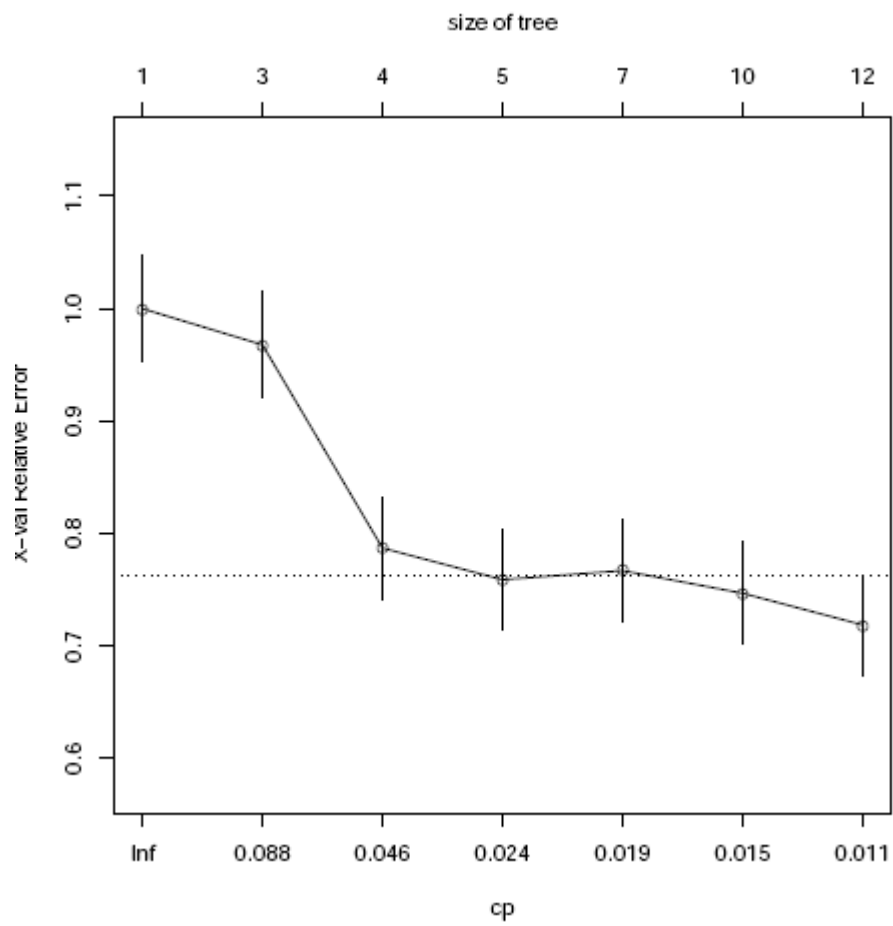


Figure 8: pruning plot for figure 7

shows this classification to be doubtful:

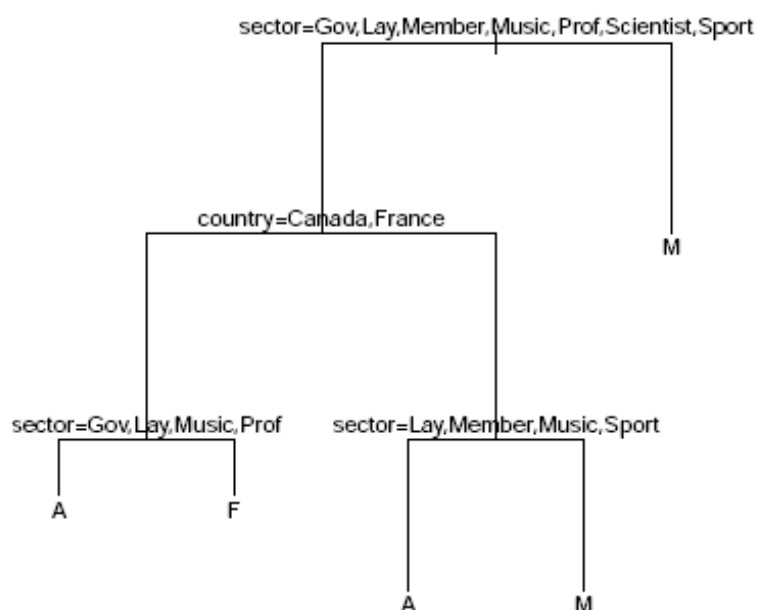


Figure 9: pruned version of figure 7 showing no influence of guideline non-conformances.

Figure 9, the pruned version of Figure 8, suggests that the relationship between predicted grammatical gender and sector is much stronger than the influence of predicted grammatical gender on guideline non-conformances. This is consistent with the fact that, historically, most professional titles have been used by men, not women, so masculine gendered words predominate as agentives.

After considering all of the trees produced from the data sets submitted to *R*, Figures 3 and 6 give the most suggestions for deeper, qualitative analysis. The points of interest will be summarised in the next section.

## 4.4. Discussion of results

Comparing the figures produced above, it appears that grammatical considerations – in this case, the predictable gender of the word form for an agentive – are not as closely related to cases of feminisation non-conformance as societal factors: modelled here by using the sector in which the agentive

noun places the referent's role. Returning in particular to Figure 6, the three sectors which are most subject to feminisation anomalies are: government, public sector and military posts. Two of these sectors also appear in Figure 3: government and public sector (the appearance of 'Drama' in Figure 3 has already been discussed) and military appears again in Figure 4. These three areas reflect positions of power within society, in that ordinary people may have to defer to or depend on members of these sectors. Reviewing all the sectors used in analysis, the table below groups and ranks the sectors by how much direct influence the members may have over the life of an average citizen:

Sector(s)	Ranking	Discussion
Lay, member of organisation	N/A	These categories were used for 'temporary' or 'changeable' positions, such as the witnesses or victims in a court case, or to highlight someone's current allegiance to a cause or belief. The agentives in this category do not have a homogeneous role in society, and it is unlikely that their referents or the public would consider the role described by the agentive to be a primary one in their lives.
Art, drama, music, sport	Low	Although these areas had been the professional domain of men for many centuries before women were admitted to them, their prestige has varied greatly, and often artists or composers are only valued decades – or centuries – after their deaths. In modern times, certain members of the artistic professions may be considered influential figures, such as Stephen Spielberg or Andy Warhol, in terms of their influence on public opinion or artistic fashion, but this is certainly not true for the professions taken as a whole, as the majority of artists, actors and musicians are working for modest sums without ever achieving fame. Similarly, sports personalities may achieve wealth and fame but rarely any influence outside the domain of their sport.

Sector(s)	Ranking	Discussion
Professional, scientist, skilled	Low	Professions or academic positions for which training is required, such as architect, stonemason, geologist or astronaut. In news reports, these people are often quoted as experts on the underlying topic of the news article rather than figuring in the news personally.
Management	Medium	The management category included professional management positions, such as CEO. Within their company, or particular reporting structure, they may control money and people, but they are rarely in the news unless they have done something the public may consider to be wrong – for example, embezzlement, overseeing major financial losses or receiving large bonus payments. On occasion, a CEO may be in the news for saving a company from failure, or creating new jobs, but they are still remote from the everyday experiences of the population.
Government	High	In the democratic countries selected for data analysis, this primarily includes elected positions such as mayor, member of parliament and ministers. The people involved in these roles hold genuine political power within the society, being able to make decisions on new laws and taxes. Members of the public may elect them, but once elected they can have a considerable impact on everyday life and may need to be petitioned by their constituents to resolve individual or collective issues, such as the closure of a local school or an objection to a planning application.

Sector(s)	Ranking	Discussion
Military	High	Military titles of all ranks were included here. As bearers of arms, members of this sector are generally considered to hold physical power, with high ranks potentially holding political power. In some of the countries studied, military power still holds an uneasy relationship with democratic power - attempted and real military takeovers have occurred in Argentina and Spain within living memory. Women have only recently entered the military in all of the countries used for the corpus collation and have never been subject to conscription, as was the case for men – though in some countries even men were only subject to conscription in times of war.
Public sector	High	Primarily public employees, including the police where the police titles do not match traditional military ones. Ordinary members of the public have to deal with public employees in order to conform with the law or to gain legal or financial benefits: for example, applying for a passport, claiming tax relief or reporting a crime. Public officials are perceived as the gatekeepers to a country's laws and benefits, and hence embody the political power held by the 'Government' sector.

Table 19: Ranking of sector classifications

Table 19 classifies the three sectors which have statistically significant relationships with feminisation anomalies as 'high' compared to all the others, since only these three sectors directly embody the idea of having power over the lives of the public at large. This classification is retrospective, being made independently of the initial sector groupings. These were created purely on the basis of similarity of role and subsequently given a 'sector' name after considering the group members as a homogeneous data set.



The quantitative analysis has successfully served to highlight two areas of data meriting deeper investigation: firstly, the possible link between grammatical gender predictability and guideline contraventions, shown in Figure 4 but missing from its pruned version, Figure 5; secondly, the identification of just three 'sector' classifications as being of significant interest compared to the remainder of the corpus data, as represented in Figures 3, 4 and 6: military, government and public sector positions.

## **4.5. Summary**

Across the two languages under study, the statistical analysis has suggested there is a relationship between difficulties in grammatical feminisation and the societal role reflected by the problematic agentive. This potential relationship seems strongest for military titles, where neither of the Romance languages in the corpus contains any instances of consistent agentive feminisation for military roles.

The statistical analysis has not shown a significant relationship between the strength of an agentive's grammatical gender (based on word form) and any feminisation anomalies. Based on this finding, the qualitative analysis can undertake to contrast items within a word form group, as their feminisation strategies have not been shown to be homogeneous.

In the next chapter, the data contravening the UN guidelines will be explored in more depth using the full text of the articles pertaining to the corpus. Chapter 5 will begin with a discussion of military titles as these appear to exhibit consistent guideline contraventions across languages and continents.

Subsequently, Chapter 6 will consider the UN guidelines themselves in the light of the grammatical gender predictability of word forms, and will further consider

general issues associated with the production and contents of non-sexist writing guidelines, including recent media debate on their content and philosophy.

## **5. Chapter 5. Qualitative issues**

Quantitative research like qualitative research can be well or poorly designed and implemented. In the war-of-words about research methodologies, poor research design is often confused with inherent weaknesses of the method.

(Scott 2010:223)

### **5.1. Introduction**

In Chapter 3, the corpus collated for this study was described in detail before being subject to quantitative analysis in Chapter 4. In the present chapter, the corpus data will be analysed qualitatively, taking particular account of the items highlighted in Chapter 3 as anomalous with respect to the chosen writing guidelines. Returning to sector classifications shown to be of particular interest from the statistical analysis (namely: Military, Government and Public Sector roles) special consideration will be given to military titles.

In the first section therefore, military titles will be discussed in detail as they appear anomalous across both the chosen languages and countries. In discussing the military, consideration will be given to the history of women in the armed forces and the nature of the military as an institution before looking at the particular military titles occurring in the corpus with female referents.

The anomalous agentives from the corpus, as highlighted in Chapter 3 (see Tables 5 and 8) will be considered next, based on how they contravene the chosen guidelines, with particular attention given here to cross-linguistic or cross-country differences in the nature of these discrepancies. These features will be compared to the quantitative findings of Chapter 4.

Lastly, some comments will be made on feminisation strategies discovered in the corpus that are explicitly highlighted by the guidelines as problematic.

## **5.2. Cross language similarities: military titles**

Across the two languages under study, and following the statistical analysis from Chapter 4, the corpus data suggests there is a relationship between the non-feminisation of agentives and the sector classification of the agentive in question. In particular, the relationship between guideline contraventions and sector seems strongest for the military, where neither language contains consistent instances of agentive feminisation for military roles. Previous researchers (e.g. Calero Fernández 2004a; Fujimura 2005) have commented that military titles were historically feminised to denote the 'wife of' the holder, but this would only be true for higher ranks, while even 'soldier' resists feminisation in the current corpus.

In this section, the admission of women into military and police forces will be discussed in its historical context, drawing on both legal and sociological sources, after which the corpus data involving military and police roles will be re-visited for qualitative analysis.

### **5.2.1. A modern military**

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century was an age of conflict in Europe with two world wars, the Spanish civil war and numerous wars of independence, all in the first half of the century, succeeded by the 'cold war' for most of the second half. It is widely recognised<sup>42</sup> that the world wars triggered major changes in the position of women within European society, allowing them, if only temporarily at first, to

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<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Barkan (1992), Chafe (1972) and Nottingham (1947).

work in areas previously reserved for men and dispelling many of the Victorian myths concerning female frailty. Following the first World War, the vote was granted to women in Britain; at the end of the second, they received voting rights in France.

In Spain, however, the position of women took a backward step following the civil war, and only after the death of Franco and subsequent restoration of democracy in the 1970s did women there start to acquire the same rights as women in countries that were already members of the European Union. Amongst such rights was the ability to enlist in the armed forces, granted in 1988<sup>43</sup>.

This recognition of a place for women within the military has been strengthened by the increasing professionalisation of military forces, particularly within NATO, since the end of the second world war. NATO countries have been systematically abolishing military conscription and, as at 2010, the EU citizens information centre was able to state:

Alongside Turkey, Germany remains the only major NATO country that still requires its young men to serve in the military. <sup>44</sup>

However, it is only since the fall of communism in the 1990s that conscription came to an end in many European countries, with France<sup>45</sup> and Spain<sup>46</sup> abolishing conscription in the current century.

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<sup>43</sup> See [http://www.reclutamiento.defensa.gob.es/ffaa/la\\_profesion/mujeres.htm](http://www.reclutamiento.defensa.gob.es/ffaa/la_profesion/mujeres.htm) web links in the current chapter were consulted in April 2012, unless otherwise stated.

<sup>44</sup> See <http://eucitizens.eu/Forum/index.php?topic=1862.0>.

In Latin America, the fall of military dictatorships in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century also signalled the end of conscription, it being abolished in Argentina in 1994 (Simon & Abdel-Moneim 2011:48). This radical shift in the composition of the military, across continents, has enhanced the profile of female recruits, who had rarely been included in conscription legislation: very few countries, Israel being the most well-known<sup>47</sup>, ever conscripted women in their military. The concept of a 'professional army' has therefore evolved alongside the inclusion of women in the services and as early as 1973 there has been a 'Women's Committee' in NATO<sup>48</sup>.

The professionalisation of the military, and the increase in technical roles within it, has resulted in a change in the proportion of officers, an officer being now:

*moins une position de commandement qu'un niveau de qualification élevé.*  
[less a position of command than a high level of qualification] (Boëne, Boulègue, Léger, Dandeker, Evetts, Gresle, & Porteret 2003:665)

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<sup>45</sup> See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/1682777.stm> for the BBC news report of conscription ending in France in 2001 (consulted 7<sup>th</sup> July 2013).

<sup>46</sup> See <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/spain/1332085/Conscription-ends-in-Spain-after-230-years.html> for the report from the Daily Telegraph on Spain ending military conscription in 2001 (consulted 7<sup>th</sup> July 2013).

<sup>47</sup> See, for example, this report from the Israeli Times of 7<sup>th</sup> July 2013 which discusses conscription exclusions for ultra-orthodox girls under reforms to come into effect in 2017: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/ministers-approve-new-universal-conscription-law/>.

<sup>48</sup> See [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50327.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50327.htm).

and in some branches of the military the proportion of officers has almost reached 50% (Boëne et al. 2003:665). However, women joining the military must be aware that:

*le culte de la masculinité (hétérosexuelle), sous-tendent les mécanismes de cohésion sur le terrain.* [the cult of heterosexual masculinity underpins cohesion on the ground] (Dandeker 2003:751)

Despite this, women have progressed in the military in many NATO countries: in 2004, 10% of officers in the UK were women, 8% in France, 7% in Holland and 6% in Germany according to Froitiée & Porteret (2008) cited in Schweitzer (2009:193). Many of these new female recruits come from strongly military families, following traditions that previously excluded them for being female, but now they are able to follow their fathers and brothers into the military (Porteret 2003:803).

In the police force in France, a significant number of commissioners is female (Pruvost 2007) to the extent that the proportion of women commissioners outweighs the number of women elsewhere in the force (Pruvost 2007:86). In both the police and the military, therefore, women are not only entering the service as professionals but also progressing rapidly through the ranks to hold prestige positions. In both services, also, these positions have been held almost exclusively by men until very recent times – specifically, post-dating the second world war. With this in mind, the military titles applied to women in the corpus will now be discussed in detail.

### **5.2.2. Military titles found in the present corpus**

In the current corpus, the following French and Spanish military titles were found:

<b>Title</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Language</b>
cabo	Corporal	Spanish
soldado	Soldier	Spanish
lieutenant-colonel	Lieutenant Colonel	French
sergent	Sergeant	French

Table 20: Military titles found in the corpus

Although in Spanish military titles are not feminised, they consistently appear with a feminine determiner when referring to women. For the French military titles, multiple variants of the masculine agentive have appeared in the corpus, as will be discussed below.

Gomez Capuz and Rodríguez González (2002) argue that the military requirement for a specific type of social cohesion promotes a jargon-rich vocabulary with abundant abbreviations, acronyms and metonyms that could only be understood within their military context (Capuz & González 2002: 268, 276). They also note a linguistic conservatism, taking after the language of the judiciary (Capuz & González 2002: 266) that promotes continuity of usage across recruitment cohorts. This, combined with the forces' historical masculinity (Anta 1990) reinforces the idea, already found in French commentaries (e.g. Porteret 2003) that women entering the military have both social and familial reasons to conform to existing norms – social and linguistic – within the services.

The discrepancy in determiner use for French and Spanish does serve, therefore, to stress the fundamental difference in variably-gendered nouns between these two languages. If not even military titles exhibit a mismatch between referent's gender and that of the determiner, this is evidence that no Spanish speaking community would ever use masculine determiners with a



female referent. This topic will be explored in detail in the second part of this chapter.

The specific social situation within the military serves to explain why military titles exhibit consistent anomalies of feminisation, but further discussion of the French data is merited by discrepancies found within the corpus. For this discussion, a full list of the named women referred to with military titles is given in Table 21:

Country	Det	Agentive	Referent
Canada	la	lieutenant-colonel	Maryse Carmichael
Canada	le	sergent	Hélène Nepton
Canada	la	sergente	Éloïse Cossette
Canada	la	sergente	Julie Martel
France	le	sergent	Kimberley Munley

Table 21: French military titles with their referents'

As can be seen in Table 21, in the original corpus the title 'sergeant' exhibited the greatest variation. The referents for the 'sergeant' data will be discussed first, after which the remaining French title, lieutenant-colonel, will be visited.

### 5.2.2.1. 'Sergeant' in the French data

In the initial corpus, as illustrated by Table 21, the Canadian data shows variation in the agentive for 'sergeant' with both masculine and feminine versions occurring in relation to different individuals. For the qualitative analysis, below, these individuals were subject to specific web searches using *Google*, since it is possible that these distinctions may represent a personal preference by the referent which has been expressed to the media and which the media is respecting for that individual. For example, on page 16 of the UN's French guidelines (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al. 1999) referring to courtesy titles, the

guide suggests the referent's wishes should be honoured in terms of expressing her civil state via her title (e.g. Miss/Mrs).

### 5.2.2.1.1. Hélène Nepton

Hélène Nepton appears regularly in the Canadian press as a spokesperson for the *Sûreté du Québec*<sup>49</sup>. In the original corpus article<sup>50</sup>, Nepton is referred to three times as *le sergent* [the (m) sergeant (m)] whilst being quoted in relation to the disappearance of a teenager named David Fortin.

Although references to her were only found using the masculine term *sergent* in the initial corpus, specific web searches for her name<sup>51</sup> show references to *la sergente* as well. The phraseology of some of these reports illustrates gender confusion similar to that highlighted by Fleischman (1997) when discussing the case of captain Prieur, as in:

***La porte-parole*** régionale de la *Sûreté du Québec*, ***le sergent*** Hélène Nepton [the (f) regional spokesperson for the *Sûreté du Québec*, the (m) sergeant Hélène Nepton]

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<sup>49</sup> See, for example, <http://www.courrierdusaguenay.com/Actualites/Faits-divers/2011-10-26/article-2786886/Un-homme-arrete-en-lien-avec-le-meurtre-au-Motel-Richelieu/1>.

<sup>50</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-nouvelliste/actualites/201004/23/01-4273366-de-nouvelles-recherches-menees-a-saint-tite.php>.

<sup>51</sup> For example, dating from April 2010: <http://lejournaldequebec.canoe.ca/actualites/faitsdiversetjudiciaires/archives/2010/04/20100421-222530.html>; and from September 2011: <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/actualites/quebec-canada/justice-et-faits-divers/201109/25/01-4451147-deux-peres-et-une-mere-se-noient-en-tendant-de-sauver-leurs-enfants.php>.

where *porte-parole* (spokesperson) is given a feminine determiner but *sergent* (sergeant) is neither feminised nor given a feminine determiner. It should be noted in this context that *porte-parole* itself does not appear as anomalous in the corpus, and is given a masculine or feminine determiner based purely on the sex of its referent. Compound words formed from a verb plus noun are masculine in French according to Lyster (2006) but a literal translation of the term would be 'speech carrier' which has none of the issues associated in English with 'spokes-man/-woman/-person' and can even be non-human – for example, a particular media organisation could be considered *porte-parole* for a political party. With no historic stereotype making a *porte-parole* a man, it appears natural, even in French, to use the referent's gender for the determiner.

Returning to *sergent*, the mixture of agentive gender in reference to Nepton, even by the same media organisation (though not within the same report) does not suggest that Nepton herself has expressed a preference for one or other term.

#### 5.2.2.1.2. Éloïse Cossette

Cossette is also a spokesperson for the Quebec police. In the original corpus article<sup>52</sup> she is described as follows:

*La porte-parole de la SQ, la sergente Éloïse Cossette, n'a cependant pas été en mesure de dire si la plainte qui a été déposée est directement liée au retrait de la page.*

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<sup>52</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-nouvelliste/actualites/201004/23/01-4273385-la-page-facebook-sur-cedrika-provencher-retiree.php>.

[The (f) spokesperson for the SQ, the (f) sergeant (f) Éloïse Cossette, was unable to say whether the complaint lodged was directly related to the removal of the page]

It is noticeable that the wording here is almost identical to the wording quoted above, for Nepton, but that the gender of 'sergeant' is different. The two reports are from the same media organisation.

A more recent search for Cossette's name has identified various permutations of gender, including:

*le sergent Éloïse Cossette*<sup>53</sup> [the (m) sergeant (m)]

*la sergent Éloïse Cossette, porte-parole de la SQ*<sup>54</sup> [the (f) sergeant (m)]

*la sergente Éloïse Cossette*<sup>55</sup> [the (f) sergeant (f)]

In fact, in this last article, Cossette is referred to with masculine determiner and agentive in the body of the text but the feminine version of both in the caption to a picture showing her shaking hands with a burglary victim to whom she is returning stolen goods. This suggests that either the picture caption was added at a different time from the writing of the article, possibly by a different person, or that the conjunction of a masculine agentive with a picture of a woman was found anomalous by the caption's author.

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<sup>53</sup> See <http://www.quebechebdo.com/Actualites/Faits-divers/2012-01-05/article-2855504/Accident-mortel-sur-l%26rsquo%3Bautoroute-40/1>.

<sup>54</sup> See <http://www.lanouvelle.net/Actualites/Faits-divers/2011-09-06/article-2741172/Journee-d%26rsquoeradication-Cisaille-%3A-pres-de-100-policiers-sur-le-terrain/1>.

<sup>55</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-nouvelliste/actualites/201202/28/01-4500832-soupir-de-soulagement-a-laccueil-jeunesse.php>.

### 5.2.2.1.3. Julie Martel

Julie Martel is also a government official:

*Il s'agit d'une infraction à la loi concernant les services de transport par taxi, confirme la sergente Julie Martel, coordonnatrice provinciale des activités médiatiques pour Contrôle Routier Québec.*<sup>56</sup>

[It concerns a legal infraction regarding taxi transport services, confirms the (f) sergeant (f) Julie Martel, provincial coordinator (f) of media activities for *Contrôle routier Québec*]

Here the agentives are both feminised: *sergente* and *coordonnatrice*. In a Google search on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2012, no references to Julie Martel with the agentive *coordonateur* were found. Further references were found to *sergent*, both gendered as above:

*Pour la sergente Julie Martel, porte-parole des contrôleurs routiers*

[for the (f) sergeant (f) Julie Martel, spokesperson for traffic control]<sup>57</sup>

and in a hybrid version:

*...note la coordonnatrice provinciale des activités médiatiques, la sergent Julie Martel.*

[notes the provincial media activity coordinator (f), the (f) sergeant (m) Julie Martel]<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-soleil/actualites/la-capitale/201004/24/01-4273997-taxi-vers-laeroport-pas-toujours-le-meilleur-tarif.php>.

<sup>57</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-soleil/actualites/transports/201201/20/01-4487880-verification-des-deneigeurs-2-vehicules-retires-27-contraventions-remises.php>.

<sup>58</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-soleil/actualites/justice-et-faits-divers/201006/29/01-4294300-les-demenageurs-sous-surveillance.php>.

As for Cossette, there appear to be three different pairings of determiner and agentive for 'the sergeant': both masculine, both feminine, and mixing a masculine-gendered agentive with a feminine determiner.

#### 5.2.2.1.4. Kimberley Munley

Kimberley Munley's profession was found only in the French press in the initial corpus, and again a further web search has been made to look at specific references to her. In 2009 she was involved in a terrorist shooting at Fort Hood, Texas, and was widely praised for her actions in the international press. Again a police, not army, sergeant, Munley is introduced as follows by *Le Figaro* on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2009:

*Depuis quelques jours, la jolie Kimberly Munley, sergent dans la police civile, avait conquis le cœur des Américains en racontant devant les caméras son rôle dans la neutralisation du tireur.*

[for several days, the (f) pretty Kimberly Munley, sergeant (m) in the civil police force, has captured the hearts of Americans by recounting for the cameras her role in taking down the shooter]<sup>59</sup>

Here, the word *sergent* is not used as an agentive and does not take a determiner, though it is still not feminised. Later in the same article another sergeant is cited as follows:

*Malgré plusieurs blessures par balles, la jeune femme, qui se trouvait aux côtés d'un autre policier de la base, le sergent Mark Todd, a expliqué à la télévision avoir «refusé de perdre connaissance».*

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<sup>59</sup> See <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2009/11/13/01003-20091113ARTFIG00433-fusillade-les-americains-se-sont-ils-trompes-de-heros-.php>.

[Despite several bullet wounds, the young woman, who was by the side of another police officer from the base, the (m) sergeant (m) Mark Todd, explained on television that she 'refused to pass out'.]

Further on, Mark Todd is described as:

*son collègue, le sergent Mark Todd, un Afro-américain de 42 ans.*

[her colleague, the (m) sergeant (m) Mark Todd, a 42-year-old Afro-American]

In contrast to her male colleague, the text of this article seems at pains to avoid using *sergent* as an agentive for Munley: whilst Todd is referred to more than once as *le sergent Mark Todd*, Munley is only linked with the word 'sergeant' in the introductory sentence, and here *sergent* is used anaphorically. The picture caption at the top of the page does use a direct agentive reference, and in the masculine:

*Le sergent Kimberley Munley à l'hôpital en compagnie du secrétaire d'Etat à la Défense, Robert Gates.*

[The (m) sergeant (m) Kimberley Munley in hospital accompanied by the secretary of state for the defence, Robert Gates.]

Of course, in the context of a photograph, it is clear that *le sergent* is in fact a woman.

*Le Monde* does not go to these lengths to avoid using *sergent* as an agentive for Munley, and does so in the masculine:

*...c'est ce qu'écrit le sergent Kimberly Munley, 34 ans, sur son profil Twitter. Cette femme officier de police...*

[...it is what the (m) sergeant (m) Kimberly Munley, 34, has written in her Twitter profile. This woman police officer..]<sup>60</sup>

though as has been seen, she is immediately qualified as a 'woman' police officer in the next sentence.

#### 5.2.2.2. 'Sergente' in France

As no instances of *la sergente* were found in the original French data, a new search for this phrase was made at *leparisien.fr*, *lemonde.fr*, *liberation.fr* and *lefigaro.fr*. These searches were carried out on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2012 using Google, and no hits were found for *Le Figaro* or *Libération*. For *Le Monde* the following feminised example was found, dating from 2009:

*«Je confirme que l'aéroport d'Hérat a été touché par une roquette. Il y a eu des dégâts. L'aéroport est opérationnel», a indiqué la sergente Angela Eggman, porte-parole de l'ISAF à Kaboul, soulignant que l'aéroport avait été fermé quelques heures*<sup>61</sup>.

[“I confirm that Herat airport was hit by a rocket. There has been damage, the airport is operational” indicated the (f) sergeant (f) Angela Eggman, spokesperson for ISAF in Kabul, stressing the airport was closed for several hours]

and this, from 2011:

*...sous les ordres, notamment, de la sergente Lynndie England*<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See <http://www.lemondedublog.com/2009/11/massacre-au-texas-et-twitter-a-la-une-du-times.php>.

<sup>61</sup> See [http://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2009/12/04/afghanistan-tirs-de-roquettes-sur-l-aeroport-d-herat\\_1276131\\_3210.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2009/12/04/afghanistan-tirs-de-roquettes-sur-l-aeroport-d-herat_1276131_3210.html).

<sup>62</sup> See <http://www.lemonde.fr/imprimer/article/2011/08/24/1562650.html>.



[under the orders, notably of the (f) sergeant (f) Lynndie England]

Examples of the agentive phrase *le sergent* in reference to women were found in *Le Figaro*, e.g., also from 2011<sup>63</sup>:

*...a déclaré le sergent Stephanie Eller sur Fox News. «Il s'agissait probablement de quelque chose d'innocent entre deux enfants», a-t-elle ajouté.*

[declared the (m) sergeant (m) Stephanie Eller on Fox News “it probably consisted of some innocent thing between two children” she added]

while *Le Parisien* (in an article from 2009) does feminise<sup>64</sup>:

*La sergente Virginie Arnold, sportive de haut niveau de La Défense et médaille de bronze par équipes au tir à l'arc lors des Jeux olympiques de Pékin*

[The (f) sergeant (f) Virginie Arnold, top military sportsperson and bronze medallist in the archery team event at the Beijing Olympic games]

On both French-speaking sides of the Atlantic, it appears there is confusion over whether to feminise ‘sergeant’ or not, with some editorial policy affecting this decision since there is a clear lack of any feminised versions in *Le Figaro*.

### 5.2.2.3. Lieutenant-colonel

Returning to Table 21, the remaining French agentive found in the initial corpus is *lieutenant-colonel* which had been given a feminine determiner where it was found. In this instance, although the feminisation guidelines may suggest the word itself should be feminised, the classification of this agentive is less clear-

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<sup>63</sup> See <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/2011/11/22/97001-20111122FILWWW00664-usa-il-appelle-la-police-pour-un-baiser.php>.

<sup>64</sup> See <http://www.leparisien.fr/seine-et-marne-77/-14-10-2009-673473.php>.

cut than *sergeant* as it may be considered a compound. Compound words formed from a verb plus noun are masculine in French (Lyster 2006) and, although the current example is not formed with a verb, the usage here with a feminine determiner but no change to the word form is comparable to the other compound cited above, *porte-parole* which exhibits no feminisation issues.

The original article is of particular interest here, and will be quoted at length<sup>65</sup>:

*Pour la première fois de son histoire, l'équipe de démonstration aérienne des forces armées canadiennes, les Snowbirds, sera dirigée par une femme. La lieutenant-colonel Maryse Carmichael prendra officiellement le commandement de l'escadron jeudi, 40 ans après sa création. En l'an 2000, la Québécoise était devenue la première femme à piloter au sein de l'équipe lors d'un spectacle aérien. Maryse Carmichael est née à Québec en 1971. Selon le site Internet des Snowbirds ([www.snowbirds.forces.gc.ca](http://www.snowbirds.forces.gc.ca)), elle a entamé sa carrière d'aviatrice à Beauport, où elle a été membre de l'escadron 630 des Cadets de l'air de 1984 jusqu'en 1988.*

[For the first time in its history, the Canadian armed forces aerial display team, the Snowbirds, will be lead by a woman. The (f) lieutenant-colonel (f) Maryse Carmichael will officially take command of the squadron on Thursday, 40 years after its creation. In 2000, the (f) Quebecois (f) became the first woman to pilot within the team during an aerial display. Maryse Carmichael was born in Quebec in 1971. According to the Snowbird's internet site she began her career as an aviator (f) at Beauport where she was a member of squadron 630 air cadets between 1984 and 1988]

In this article, Carmichael's sex is prominent, as she is the first woman to lead the Canadian aerial acrobatics team. The feminisation of *aviateur* [aviator] to

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<sup>65</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-soleil/actualites/societe/201005/02/01-4276327-une-femme-de-quebec-a-la-tete-des-snowbirds.php>.

*aviatrice* mirrors the feminisation strategy used for sergeant Martel, above, who is media *coordinatrice* for road safety in Quebec. A Google search on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2012 showed consistent use of *coordinateur/coordinatrice* by sex of referent in articles on *www.cyberpresse.ca*, *lemonde.fr*, *leparisien.fr* and *lefigaro.fr*. The same is true for *aviateur/aviatrice*, though the only referenced *aviatrice* found outside Canada was Amelia Earhart – the most common *aviateur* was Saint-Exupery, possibly reflecting a certain archaic tinge to the word itself.

At *www.cyberpresse.ca* there was also a reference to a Julie Payette<sup>66</sup>:

*Les promoteurs de l'idée soulignent que Julie Payette est une aviatrice et astronaute de renommée mondiale qui est une source d'inspiration et de fierté pour tous, et plus particulièrement pour les jeunes.*

[the promoters underline that Julie Payette is an (f) aviator (f) and astronaut (f) of world renown who is a source of inspiration and pride for all and particularly for the young]

this, in the context of naming an airport after her.

### **5.2.3. Summary of issues illustrated by military titles**

From this résumé of military titles and the associated agentives, feminisation serves primarily to highlight the sex of a referent where this person is performing gender-atypical acts: the first woman stunt pilot, a woman in the role of military hero, etc. When the woman's role is not being profiled, for example, when acting as a spokesperson, doubts over 'correct' grammatical gender seem

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<sup>66</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/actualites/regional/201007/29/01-4302181-saint-hubert-petition-pour-que-laeroport-porte-le-nom-de-julie-payette.php>.

to resurface, and the journalists appear to choose determiners and feminisation strategies either randomly or, as appears to be the case for *Le Figaro*, strictly in line with the journal's editorial policy.

This problem was previously highlighted in regard to the female captain, Prieur, who was imprisoned for the infamous sinking of the *Greenpeace* vessel, *Rainbow Warrior*, in the Pacific Ocean in the 1980s. Fleischman (1997), citing Yaguello (1989) in a discussion of Prieur's subsequent pregnancy, reviews the issue of pronoun usage with masculine determiners, highlighting the dilemma between having the pronoun agree with the referent (in this case, Prieur herself) or the agentive (the masculine *capitaine*). Yaguello herself says:

*Évidemment, ce qui simplifierait tout, ça serait de pouvoir féminiser tous les noms d'agent et d'oser utiliser la capitaine. Il faudra, sans doute, attendre le vingt et unième siècle.*

[Evidently, what would simplify everything would be the ability to feminise all agentives and dare to use *la capitaine*. Undoubtedly, we'll have to wait until the 21<sup>st</sup> century for that] Yaguell (1987), cited in Gervais (1993:138).

Although we are now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century – and 20 years have passed since Yaguello made these comments – it seems there is still resistance to (or, at best, confusion regarding) the use of feminine determiners with nouns traditionally considered masculine in French. This raises questions about grammatical gender that will be addressed again in the next chapter.

The first part of this chapter has served to stress the specifically French problem of determiner gender agreement. In Spanish, the determiner always has the same gender as the referent's sex, but in French there is genuine confusion over whether this practice is legitimate. Although both languages

have difficulty feminising military titles, the flexibility allowed for Spanish determiners mitigates the problem of female visibility.

The next section will look in detail at differences between the two languages, in Section 5.3, and differences between feminisation strategies within a single language, across countries, in Section 5.4.

### **5.3. Cross-language differences**

In this section, the items highlighted as contravening the UN writing guidelines when considered in Chapter 3 (as shown in Tables 5 and 8) will be visited individually, based on the type of anomaly they exhibit. Firstly, mismatches between the sex of the referent and the gender of the determiner are considered in the context of the notion of variably-gendered nouns. Then, items in the corpus that exhibited variations in feminisation will be considered in a cross-country context, to determine whether there is a clear preference for one feminisation strategy over another at particular locations.

#### **5.3.1. Determiners with variably-gendered nouns**

With the exception of military titles, the specific examples that the results suggest should be analysed in detail vary greatly between the two languages, though the linguistic contrasts here are significant in themselves. The difference in grammatical requirements for ‘epicene’ nouns between French and Spanish, where the French agentives require a masculine determiner even for female referents whilst Spanish agentives never appear to take a masculine determiner when referring to women, will be discussed first.

### **5.3.1.1. Determiner production theories**

Before considering the corpus data, it is interesting to consider how determiner production has been debated in the field of psycholinguistics in recent years, expanding the discussion away from the simple, binary issue of grammatical gender.

Psycholinguistic research on the production of determiners has been undertaken by Caramazza, Miozzo, Costa, Schiller and Alario (2001). The conclusion they draw is that determiners in both French and Spanish depend not only on grammatical gender but also phonetic properties of the associated noun: for example, French nouns beginning with a vowel take the determiner /l/ instead of the gender-specific /lə/ or /la/. Plural nouns in French take the determiner /le/ regardless of gender.

In Spanish, both masculine and feminine versions of the plural determiner exist, with mixed-gender groups taking the masculine determiner. However, a small group of feminine Spanish nouns (0.5% - Miozzo & Caramazza 1999) which begin with a stressed /a/ take the masculine singular determiner /el/ instead of /la/. Caramazza et al. (2001) conclude, referring first to their own earlier research:

Miozzo and Caramazza (1999) speculated that:

...the point at which determiners are selected in a language is defined by a "temporal optimization" principle: prepare the phonological material for production at the earliest possible stage of production.

However, the results from Spanish are inconsistent with this principle. In Spanish, the feminine (definite) determiners depend on the phonological context of production but the masculine (definite) determiners *el* and *los* are fully specified once number and gender are selected. If the temporal optimisation principle were to define the point at which determiners are selected, we would be forced to conclude that Spanish masculine determiners are selected early, as appears to be the case for Dutch and German. We would then expect to observe a gender congruity effect in the production of masculine NPs (Costa, Sebastian-Galles, Miozzo, & Caramazza 1999) by Spanish speakers, either for feminine or for masculine determiners. This finding implies that it is not the "temporal optimization" principle that determines the point at which closed-class words are selected, but something more like a "maximum consistency" or "highest common denominator" principle.

Conversely, Eddington and Hualde (2008) describe the anomalous feminine Spanish nouns as 'hermaphrodite' and show that gender agreement varies by position for these nouns:

[T]here is a tendency for the nouns of this class to be treated as grammatical hermaphrodites, which results in masculine modifiers appearing on their left and feminine modifiers on their right. (Eddington & Hualde 2008: 5)

Since determiners appear on the left, many Spanish speakers select masculine gender for these, even if feminine gender would be acceptable phonetically. Eddington and Hualde continue:

[S]peakers do not necessarily conclude that *el* is an allomorph of the feminine article, but rather, identify it with the masculine article. These findings suggest that noun adjective agreement is based on analogy to stored exemplars of past experience. (Eddington & Hualde 2008: 6)

Elaborating other exceptions to established grammatical rules, they cite the following examples of feminine determiner use, despite the presence of a stressed /a/:

Feminine nouns with biologically female referents and nominalized adjectives: *la árabe* 'the Arabic woman', *la árbitro/a* 'the female referee', *la alta* 'the tall one', *la árida* 'the barren one'

They also cite Corbett (2006) to support the idea that Spanish is a language with 'hybrid agreement':

[...] where the noun refers to an animate entity and there is a mismatch between meaning and form. A meaning/form mismatch in gender is produced when the grammatical gender of the noun conflicts with the biological sex of the referent.

Their base data comparison is to the *Real Academia Española* [RAE] allowing them to conclude:

Since our measure of what is erroneous is based on prescriptive grammar, this means that the subjects were least likely to conform to prescriptive norms for the gender inflection of modifiers of hermaphroditic nouns.

This research evidence from Spanish suggests that grammatical gender is linked more to the pattern of determiner use than to the word form for many speakers. In French, by contrast, the selection of determiners is more fluid and can vary depending on the phonetic context. However, in French this appears to strengthen the academic notion of grammatical gender being 'abstract' whilst in Spanish the concept of grammatical gender is linked to the semantic notion of sex, meaning that references to named people take the determiner associated with that person's sex, not the grammatical gender of the agentive used to refer to them.



The flexibility allowed in Spanish determiner selection minimises the need to feminise the agentive itself, allowing constructions such as *la soldado* to become the norm. The restrictions imposed in French are obviously causing doubts related to 'correct usage', which will be discussed further in the next chapter (see Section 6.3.2.2). In the current chapter, the next section considers cases where multiple new feminine word forms for the same masculine noun were present in the original corpus.

### **5.3.1.2. Epicene Examples from French**

The two epicene French nouns *vedette* and *témoin* are perhaps the 'exceptions that prove the rule' regarding determiner gender. Considering *témoin* first: to be a witness is an entirely temporary state, specific to one event, unrelated to the daily life of the referent. In a similar way, *vedette*, especially in today's world of temporary celebrity, may not define someone's role but merely their relationship with the media. In both these cases, it is possible to detach the person from the description, contrasting with examples of military rank, job title or government position where it is more typical to closely associate the role with the person. This contrast is highlighted by Fleischman (1997) when discussing how a person identified by their masculine-gendered role (in this case, a Navy captain) can be described as pregnant.

Further discussion of the 'permanence' of an agentive will be given in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.2.3).

## **5.4. Cross-country differences**

### **5.4.1. Multiple feminisations**

Within both the French and Spanish data there are instances of multiple feminisations for the same masculine noun with certain words showing

ambiguity of form. The qualitative results suggest it may be a country-related phenomenon, rather than a specifically linguistic one. As has already been seen above, the French word for 'sergeant' appears in three variants:

*le sergent* [the (m) sergeant (m)]

*la sergent* [the (f) sergeant (m)]

*la sergente* [the (f) sergeant (f)]

but editorial policy – for example at *Le Figaro*, where all instances found were fully masculine – may also play a part. The other French word found in the corpus with multiple versions was 'Chancellor':

Publication	Country	Det	Agentive	Referent
cyberpresse	Canada	la	chancelière	Angela Merkel
liberation	France	la	chancelière	Angela Merkel
clicanoo	Reunion	la	chancelière	Angela Merkel
le droit	Canada	le	chancelier	Huguette Labelle

Table 22: references in French to 'Chancellor'

In the Spanish corpus, three words exhibited multiple forms: 'judge', 'president' and 'councillor'. References to *president* and *councillor* are shown in Table 23 and references to 'judge' in Table 24:

Publication	Country	Det	Agentive	Referent
voxpopuli	Argentina	la	concejal	Eleonora Vigo
El País	Spain	la	concejal	Assumpta Escarp
El Mundo	Spain	la	concejala	Isabel Vilallonga
El País	Spain	la	concejala	Alicia Moreno
Diario	Argentina	la	presidenta	Cristina Fernandez
Diario	Argentina	la	presidenta	Cristina Kirchner
voxpopuli	Argentina	la	presidenta	Cristina Fernández
voxpopuli	Argentina	la	presidenta	Felisa Gottschalk
El Mundo	Spain	la	presidenta	Cristina Fernández
El País	Spain	la	presidenta	Cristina Fernández

Publication	Country	Det	Agentive	Referent
El País	Spain	la	presidenta	Elvira Rodríguez
El País	Spain	la	presidenta	Laura Chinchilla
voxpopuli	Argentina	la	presidente	Cristina Kirchner

Table 23: multiple feminisations in Spanish for 'President' and 'Councillor'.

In Spain, references to female judges were found to generally utilise the masculine (or variably-gendered?) word form while Argentina feminises, with the following exceptions:

Publication	Country	Det	Agentive	Referent
<i>El País</i>	Spain	la	jueza	Gemma Gallego
<i>El Mundo</i>	Spain	la	jueza	Katia Gómez Germán

Table 24: Instances in Spain of the feminised version for 'Judge'

It should be noted that all of these roles (i.e. chancellor, judge, councillor and president) are from sectors highlighted as of interest in Chapter 4. The four words will now be discussed in detail.

#### 5.4.1.1. Chancellor

Table 22 shows that references to the German chancellor Angela Merkel, found in France, Canada and Reunion Island, all feminise her role and use a female determiner. A single reference was found, to the Canadian University chancellor, Huguette Labelle, in which the agentive and determiner remain masculine in gender. Further *Google* searches, on 22nd April 2012, led to the following additional references to Labelle:

*L'ancien recteur de l'Université d'Ottawa Gilles G. Patry (ci-dessus) de même que l'actuelle chancelière de l'établissement Huguette Labelle ont tous deux...*

[The ex-rector (m) of Ottawa University, Gilles G. Patry (above) and the current chancellor (f) of the establishment, Huguette Labelle have both...]<sup>67</sup>

The University itself, however, prefers the masculine version of the agentive for its chancellor:

*Le chancelier Huguette Labelle et le recteur émérite Gilles G. Patry décorés de l'Ordre de l'Ontario*

[The (m) chancellor (m) Huguette Labelle and the (m) emeritus rector (m) Gilles G. Patry...]<sup>68</sup>

References in news reports though, tend to feminise:

*Mme Labelle refuse ces généralisations. Cette ancienne sous-ministre fédérale, ex-présidente de l'ACDI et chancelière de l'Université d'Ottawa...*

[Mrs Labelle refuses generalisations. This (f) ex (f) federal under-minister (f), ex president (f) of ACDI and chancellor (f) of the University of Ottawa...]<sup>69</sup>

suggesting that the University of Ottawa may have a deliberate 'editorial' policy of its own, at least in its press releases, that follows a prescriptive grammatical line and uses the base form for its chancellor even when she is a woman, whilst Canadian society, reflected in the on-line press, prefers to feminise.

Other instances of this word form within the corpus are: *policière*, *conseillère* and *cuisinière* (police officer, councillor and cook). No examples of the

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<sup>67</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-droit/actualites/ville-dottawa/201101/23/01-4362976-gilles-patry-et-huguette-labelle-decores-de-lordre-de-lontario.php>.

<sup>68</sup> See [http://www.medias.uottawa.ca/mediaroom/nouvelles-details\\_2206.html](http://www.medias.uottawa.ca/mediaroom/nouvelles-details_2206.html).

<sup>69</sup> See <http://www.cyberpresse.ca/debats/chroniques/yves-boisvert/201112/01/01-4473385-la-dynamite-de-la-corruption.php>.

masculine versions these words were found referring to women in the original corpus, despite the first two also being classified in sectors highlighted in Chapter 4 (see Table 13 for a descriptive list of sectors and Table 19 for a ranking of the sectors by their social prestige and impact). This reinforces the idea that the single example of *chancelière* in the corpus is a reflection of editorial policy by the university. Hyper-correction of this type will be discussed further in the next chapter, as there are now two examples of ‘editorial policy’ determining usage: the news medium *Le Figaro*, in France, and the University of Ottawa in Canada.

The remaining examples in this section come from the Spanish corpus data and represent cross-continental differences in feminisation strategies.

#### 5.4.1.2. Councillor

Table 25, below, gives the corpus references to *concejal*, town councillor, in Spanish:

Publication	Country	Det	Agentive	Referent
voxpopuli	Argentina	la	concejal	Eleonora Vigo
El País	Spain	la	concejal	Assumpta Escarp
El Mundo	Spain	la	concejala	Isabel Vilallonga
El País	Spain	la	concejala	Alicia Moreno

Table 25: Councillors in the Spanish corpus data.

Table 25 shows there are two options for agentives referring to councillors in Spanish: one equivalent to the base masculine form and one with an additional, feminising -a. Table 26, below, lists all the words of this form (i.e. ending –/a) that were found in the Spanish section of the corpus:

Country	Title	Agentive
Spain	councillor	concejal

Country	Title	Agentive
Argentina	councillor	concejal
Spain	councillor	concejala
Argentina	federal prosecutor	fiscal federal
Argentina	liberal	liberal
Argentina	prosecutor	fiscal
Argentina	radical	radical
Spain	town councillor	edil
Spain	prosecutor	fiscal
Spain	speaker	vocal

Table 26: Spanish agentives of form *-l* found in the corpus referring to women.

Although the guidelines suggest this word form should be feminised, and hence that *concejala* is the correct agentive for women, Table 26 shows that words ending in *-l* are not generally feminised in either variety of Spanish, even in the case of agentives formed from adjectives, such as *radical* or *liberal*<sup>70</sup>.

A web search on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012 revealed continuing confusion over *concejal*, with this from *El Mundo*:

*La concejala de Servicios Sociales del Ayuntamiento de Leganés, María Dolores Montoro*

[The (f) councillor (f) for social services in the Leganés town hall, Maria Dolores Montoro]<sup>71</sup>

which nevertheless continues:

*La edil ha llegado sola esta mañana al Ayuntamiento*

[The (f) town councillor (f) arrived alone at the town hall this morning...]

<sup>70</sup> The Spanish Academy's online dictionary does not give a feminine version for the adjectives *radical* or *liberal* (e.g. see <http://lema.rae.es/drae/?val=radical> consulted 30<sup>th</sup> December 2014)

<sup>71</sup> See <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2012/01/26/madrid/1327605847.html>.

Another *El Mundo* report, however, has:

*La concejal de EU en el ayuntamiento de Alicante Ángeles Cáceres ha anunciado su dimisión de la corporación*

[The (f) councillor (m) for *EU* in the Alicante town hall, Angeles Caceres, has announced her resignation from the corporation]<sup>72</sup>

Similar confusion is found in *El País*, but turning to the Argentinean site [www.clarin.com](http://www.clarin.com), only one reference to *concejala* was found on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012:

*Según el diario El Mundo, se trata del "mayor robo de piezas contemporáneas hasta la fecha en España". El tipo de robo "hace pensar a las fuerzas policiales que existía algún tipo de información desde dentro que pudo facilitar el robo de este camión", indicó en conferencia de prensa este jueves la concejala de Seguridad Ciudadana del ayuntamiento de Getafe, Sara Hernández.*

[According to *El Mundo*, it is the 'worst robbery of contemporary pieces in Spain to date' ... indicated the (f) councillor (f) for local security in the Getafe town hall, Sara Hernandez.]<sup>73</sup>

As this is the only example of the feminised *concejala* found on this website (the article is dated 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2010) and is quoting the Spanish daily, *El Mundo*, it is reasonable to assume that this single instance is influenced by the Spanish quotation and does not reflect usage within Argentina. A search on the same site for *la concejal*, in contrast, gives 24 hits.

Similar results were found for [www.voxpopuli.com.ar](http://www.voxpopuli.com.ar), the other Argentinean press agency used in the original corpus, suggesting *concejala* is local to Spain, though existing in parallel with *la concejal*.

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<sup>72</sup> See <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2012/03/15/alicante/1331825576.html>.

<sup>73</sup> See [http://www.clarin.com/sociedad/Espana-roban-camion-repleto-obras\\_0\\_382761931.html](http://www.clarin.com/sociedad/Espana-roban-camion-repleto-obras_0_382761931.html).

Within Spain, a *Google* search of 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012 gave the following hits:

Domain	Hits for ' <i>la concejal</i> '	Hits for ' <i>la concejala</i> '
elpais.es	650	55
www.elmundo.es	3570	5690
abc.es	311000	213000

Table 27: Numbers of hits for the base and feminised versions of *concejal* in Spain.

Table 27 shows there is no general agreement in the feminised form for *concejal* in Spain, with the *concejal* / *concejala* majority usage varying by media organisation (*El Mundo* and *ABC* use the feminised version a greater proportion of the time than *El País*, possibly showing a preference for grammatical feminisation in the more conservative press) but both forms appear in all three domains<sup>74</sup>. In Argentina, however, it appears that *concejal*, without additional morphological feminisation, is the preferred word form to use with women referents.

### 5.4.1.3. President

Table 28 gives the corpus entries found for female references where the base word form ends *-ente* or *-ante*, of which *presidente* [president] was the only anomalous entry found in the original corpus:

Country	Title	Agentive
Spain	manager	gerente
Spain	newcomer	debutante
Spain	police officer	agente
Argentina	president	presidenta

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<sup>74</sup> Note also that Norbeck (2013:140) perceives a continuing tendency to refer to the wives of councillors, ambassadors and mayors via their husband's role in the CREA (*Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual*: <http://corpus.rae.es/creanet.html>).



Spain	president	presidenta
Argentina	president	presidente
Spain	singer	cantante
Argentina	singer	cantante
Spain	student	estudiante
Spain	vice president	vicepresidenta

Table 28: Spanish agentives of form *–ente/-ante* found in the corpus to refer to women.

Table 28 clearly shows that *presidenta*, is anomalous within the corpus data, with other words of this form remaining unchanged for female referents. Furthermore, the Argentinean data contains two forms for *presidente*, both the base form and the feminised version *presidenta*, which is the consistent usage for Spain. Returning to Table 23, above, it can be seen that the only instances of *presidente* from the original corpus refer to the current president of Argentina, when referenced within that country. This suggests confusion over the correct usage for one explicit societal role – president of the country – rather than a general confusion with the word form. Additional web searches were made on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012 for the feminised versions of the remaining agentives from Table 28, with the following results:

Word	Hits in Argentina	Hits in Spain
gerenta	2 (voxpopuli) 332 (clarin)	2 (El Mundo)
debutanta	0	0
agenta	0	0
cantanta	3 (clarin)	7 (El Mundo)
estudianta	0	0

Table 29: hits on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012 for feminised versions of remaining *-te* words in Spanish, searched with feminine determiner (e.g. '*la gerenta*').

Table 29 shows the number of hits found for the feminised versions of the remaining items in Table 28. Equivalent masculine word form searches were

then made for the two items successfully found above, but in conjunction with a feminine determiner: *la cantante* [the singer] in the *El Mundo* domain returns 20,000 results. Similarly, *la gerente* [the manager] gives 1,100 hits in *El Mundo*'s domain, 28 in *Voxpopuli* and 1,400 in *Clarín*. This suggests, in the case of *El Mundo* that the feminised hits may simply be typographical errors, meaning the feminised usages are only present in Argentina. The three entries for *cantanta* in the *Clarín* domain all appear to be typographical errors for 'cantata' when read in the context of the full news article.

For *gerente*, then, it appears there is some feminisation in Argentina but none in Spain. For the other words of the same pattern as *presidente*, no deliberate feminisation is common in either country.

Table 30 shows the hits, by domain, for *la presidente* and *la presidenta* in a Google search on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

Domain	Hits for ' <i>la presidente</i> '	Hits for ' <i>la presidenta</i> '
clarin.com	11200	93000
www.voxpopuli.com.ar	375	712
elpais.es	137	4210
www.elmundo.es	1710	28500

Table 30: hits using Google for the two versions of *president* in the press domains of the original Spanish corpus selection.

Attempting to restrict these results by the current female presidents in South America, Christina Kirchner and Dilma Rousseff, further gradation of the results can be shown as in Table 31:

Domain	' <i>la presidente Dilma</i> '	' <i>la presidenta Dilma</i> '	' <i>la presidente Cristina</i> '	' <i>la presidenta Cristina</i> '
clarin.com	4	8700	9840	266000
www.voxpopuli.com.ar	0	0	9	41

elpais.es	0	72	4	38
www.elmundo.es	1	164	67	1770

Table 31: *Google* search hits for variations of president including the first names *Cristina* and *Dilma*

Domain	<i>la presidente</i>	<i>la presidenta</i>
clarin.com	1710	109000
www.voxpopuli.com.ar	209	408
elpais.es	9	813
www.elmundo.es	1290	17300

Table 32: *Google* search hits excluding the names *Cristina*, *Dilma*, *Bresil* and *Argentina*

The results in Tables 30, 31 and 32 show that *presidente* and *presidenta* are both in use in both countries, with no particular bias restricting them to the two current female presidents in South America. There seems to be a clear difference in the popularity of *presidente* across the media organisations, however, with *voxpopuli* using it almost 30% of the time compared to less than 10% in the other media links. Similarly, it appears that *Clarín* is the only organisation to use *gerenta* with any frequency, where it appears in about a quarter of references (*la gerente* gives 1400 hits for this domain).

It is clear from the list of words in Table 28 that only *president*, *manager* and *police officer* hold positions of power, and no instances of *agenta* were found at all. The lack of *agenta* references compared to *presidenta* and *gerenta* will be discussed when considering the debate on guidelines themselves (see Section 6.2.2) as it is possible that *agenta* is too similar in sound to *agenda* and hence is not used for the reason cited by some commentators: that an existing association to the word is non-agentive and hence it is not possible to feminise the masculine agentive. The example often cited for this is the Spanish word for

a fashion model: always the masculine *modelo* since *modela* implies an exemplar, not a mannequin.

However, the remaining two anomalous words, *president* and *manager*, when feminised, exhibit a deliberate highlighting of the gender of the incumbent since the masculine version is considered variably-gendered for other members of this word form group.

#### 5.4.1.4. Judge

The word *presidente* is considered variably-gendered by the guidelines used for this study, but the word *juez* (judge) is recommended for morphological feminisation. While instances of both *juez* and *jueza* are present in the corpus, only two instances of *jueza* were found in the data from Spain, the normal usage there being *juez* for both male and female judges. All instances of Argentinean data, however, used *jueza*.

Table 23 showed the Spanish references to *jueza* which will now be quoted in detail.

Katia Gómez Germán appears in a single article in *El Mundo*:

*La decisión fue adoptada por la jueza de la Quinta Sala de la Cámara Civil y Comercial del Juzgado de Primera Instancia del Distrito Nacional (centro de la capital), Katia Gómez Germán*

[The decision was made by the (f) judge (f) ... Katia Gomez German]<sup>75</sup>

However, the headline states:

*Una juez prohíbe una fundación y un libro sobre figura del dictador Trujillo*

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<sup>75</sup> See <http://www.elmundo.es/america/2010/11/11/noticias/1289507095.html>.

[A (f) judge (m) prohibits a foundation and book concerning the dictator Trujillo]

and the initial line states:

*Una jueza de la República Dominicana rechazó la instalación en el país ...*

[A (f) judge (f) from the Dominican Republic rejects the installation in the country...]

As was mentioned earlier when discussing *Councillor* (Section 5.4.1.2) this suggests that the Spanish news report is based on an original Latin American news report and has probably retained the original vocabulary. To this end, the citation from *El País*<sup>76</sup> appears to have been 'corrected' since it was first collected as this page, viewed on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2012, now refers to:

*la juez Gemma Gallego* [the (f) judge (m) Gemma Gallego]

As for *presidente/a* above, specific Google searches, by domain, were then carried out for the word *juez/a* and are shown in table 33, below.

Domain	<i>la juez</i>	<i>la jueza</i>
clarin.com	1070	21300
www.voxpopuli.com.ar	45	1300
elpais.es	1660	103
www.elmundo.es	20600	4650

Table 33: Google hits from 29th April 2012 for the phrases '*la juez*' and '*la jueza*' in the sites from the original corpus.

Table 33 shows that, although both forms of the agentive are in use in both Argentina and Spain, there is a clear preference for the variable-gender version in Spain and the feminised version in Argentina.

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<sup>76</sup> See [http://elpais.com/elpais/2010/05/14/actualidad/1273825020\\_850215.html](http://elpais.com/elpais/2010/05/14/actualidad/1273825020_850215.html).

As was previously mentioned, although the guidelines used for this study suggest *juez* should be feminised, the form *-ez* is more likely to be feminine than masculine in Spanish (Teschner 1983)<sup>77</sup>, hence an additional word form for the feminine version does seem unnecessary. Many of the references to *jueza* in Spain, from the searches for Table 33, suggest that the judges referred to using a feminised agentive may be resident outside Spain, and the reference to them using this form may be copying the local usage present in a national report from the country in question. This approach was seen in reference to *concejala*, where this feminised Peninsula form appeared Argentina only in the context of a quotation from a Spanish news report.

#### **5.4.2. Morphological differences across continents**

For the words *councillor* and *judge* it appears there is a difference in feminisation strategy between Spain and Argentina. For ‘councillor’, there is a general preference in Argentina for the base masculine form, without grammatical feminisation, but two feminine word forms appear in Spain. For ‘judge’, morphological feminisation is preferred in Argentina but the base form is predominantly used in Spain.

For ‘president’, the feminised form seems preferred in both Argentina and Spain, but there is greater use of the base form in Argentina than in Spain, with some differences of policy apparent within media organisations of the same

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<sup>77</sup> Teschner (1983) classifies 84% of words ending *-ez* as feminine but states the following regarding *juez*: ‘As a noun referring to an individual human, *juez* is wisely listed in the 1970 Academy dictionary as “*común de dos [géneros]*”; however since all adjectives modifying it there appear as masculine, we have listed the word as masculine here.’ (Teschner 1983:ff9). In contrast, 83% of words ending *-az* are masculine.

country for one form over the other, as illustrated by the almost equitable distribution of the competing word forms in *voxpopuli*. The clear lack of morphological feminisation for other words of the same form throws ‘president’ into relief as a problematic agentive for women referents. In Section 6.3.1.8, possible reasons for this will be explored in detail.

In the final section of this chapter, the remaining non-conformances to guidelines will be covered though, as will be seen, few conclusions can be drawn from this data.

## 5.5. Dispreferred feminisations

The final topic to consider based on the highlighted feminisation anomalies from Chapter 3 is that of morphological feminisation strategies that are explicitly condemned by the guidelines. This final section will briefly discuss specific feminisation suffixes of which the feminisation guidelines strongly disapprove.

The corpus data contained two instances, one per language, of the dispreferred feminisation morphology: *-isa/-esse*. In French, this was exhibited by the role of ‘mayor’; in Spanish by ‘poet’. The suffix *-ess* is described thus in the English section of the UN guidelines:

Avoid *-ess* wherever possible. It is often pejorative or perceived as such.  
(Desprez-Bouanchaud et al. 1999)

and the same sentiment is expressed in guidelines for French, Spanish and other European languages.

Table 34, below, contains the examples of this feminisation strategy from the original corpus:

Country	Determiner	Agentive	Referent
Argentina	La	poetisa	Alejandra Pizarnik
Canada	La	mairesse	Danielle Roy Marinelli
Canada	La	mairesse	Vicki May Hamm
Canada	La	mairesse	Denise M. Levesque
Canada	La	mairesse	Danielle May Hamm
Canada	La	mairesse	Francine Ruest Jutras

Table 34: Feminisations using -ess

Corpus references to female poets in the data from Spain all used the word *poeta*; references to female mayors in the data from France and Reunion Island all used the word *maire*. All Canadian references in the original corpus used *mairesse*; the single Argentinean reference to a female poet used *poetisa*. As this is very little data to draw conclusions from, the remainder of this section will discuss further searches for the agentives in Table 34.

### 5.5.1. Mairesse

The existence of the word *mairesse* in the Canadian data alone is particularly interesting, as Canada is widely considered to be progressive in terms of linguistic sexism. Unfortunately, the initial data collection site, *cyberpresse.ca*, has now changed to *lapresse.ca* and the original articles are no longer available, nor do current site searches adequately recover the individual words *maire*, *mairesse* so this data cannot be followed up in detail. As may be expected, given previous comments on its editorial policy, *Le Figaro* gives around 900 hits for the phrase *la mairesse* (5<sup>th</sup> May 2013, via *Google*) however, it shows even larger numbers for *la maire*. A similar result was found for *Le Monde*, with *maire* clearly preferred to *mairesse*, though both do occur.

This suggests that the initial data collection may have taken place at a time when, coincidentally, few references were being made to female mayors,



rendering the original corpus data unreliable. It should be noted though that the original articles were genuinely referring to women in the role of mayor, not to the wives of mayors. The notion of feminisations denoting 'wife of' will be expanded upon in Section 6.2.2.

### 5.5.2. Poetisa

Although there are corpus references in French to arcane roles using the suffix -esse (specifically: 'princess' and 'goddess') the Spanish form *poetisa* is anomalous as the base word for poet, *poeta*, already ends in -a. For this reason the UN guidelines for Spanish specifically note that this form is overkill:

*[...] la tendencia del español a la feminización de los nombres se advierte en la formación de nombres femeninos de mujer a partir incluso de nombres femeninos de varón en -a: poeta/poetisa...*

[the Spanish tendency to feminise is shown in the formation of feminine nouns even from nouns for males which are already feminine, ending in -a: poet/poetess...] (Paoli 1999:6)

In a search on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2013, 78 references were found to *poetisa* via a Google search in the domain *elpais.com*, though nearly 1000 were found on *elmundo.es*. About 700 hits were found on *www.clarin.com* but a single entry only in *www.voxpopuli.com.ar*.

Searching instead for *la poeta*, no results were found on *voxpathuli* and about 500 on *Clarín*. Similarly, about 500 references to *la poeta* were found on the *El Mundo* website but only 9 at *El País*. This suggests that *poeta* and *poetisa* co-exist in both countries, with an apparent (numerical) preference for *poetisa*. As with the word 'aviator', described in the discussion of French military titles, the word *poetisa* may be used for a specific, 'antique' effect: to present the profession of poet as quaint and out of touch with the modern world. However,

recent researchers (Norbeck 2013; Smith Avendaño De Barón 2012) suggest that *la poeta* is a very recent coinage, citing the corpora CREA<sup>78</sup> and CORDE<sup>79</sup> to show it has only been in use since the turn of this century. The first occurrence of *la poetisa* in the dictionary of the Spanish Academy is given as 1737 by Smith Avendaño de Barón (2012), and she argues that the choice between *poeta* and *poetisa* now comes down to personal preference on the part of the poet<sup>80</sup>.

In the case of both *maitresse* and *poetisa*, no conclusions can be drawn from the original corpus data as new searches are not reproducing the originally suggested discrepancies, where the dispreferred word forms occurred only on the American continents.

## 5.6. Summary

The cross-linguistic and cross-country differences are summarised below.

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<sup>78</sup> *Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual* [reference corpus of current Spanish]:

<http://corpus.rae.es/creanet.html> (accessed 30th December 2014)

<sup>79</sup> *Corpus Diacrónico del Español* [diachronic corpus of Spanish]:

<http://corpus.rae.es/cordenet.html> (accessed 30th December 2014)

<sup>80</sup> See also de Andrés Castellanos (2002) who states: “*creemos que en el español actual, los usuarios podemos libremente elegir entre poeta y poetisa, seguramente porque se han superado ya los prejuicios que llevaron a muchas mujeres del siglo XX a rechazar el femenino poetisa.*” [we believe that in current Spanish, there is a free choice between *poeta* and *poetisa*, because the prejudices which led women in the 20th century to reject *poetisa* have been surpassed].

### **5.6.1. Cross-linguistic determiner use**

As has been shown, Spanish speakers always prefer determiner agreement with the sex of the referent for human agents, even for nouns that appear grammatically masculine. In French, however, determiners are still subject to prescriptive grammar restrictions and numerous instances have been found of determiners of a gender which do not match the sex of the referent, both for male and female agents. The general use of masculine determiners with women does now seem to be restricted to specific editorial policies, with *Le Figaro* appearing to avoid feminine determiners with masculine nouns at all costs. There does not appear to be a country-specific bias to this practice with many examples in Canada, despite a general feeling expressed by previous researchers that this country's proximity to the English-speaking world has made it more sensitive to the issues of sexism<sup>81</sup>.

### **5.6.2. Cross-country differences in feminisation form**

In Spanish, the corpus and the subsequent qualitative analysis, above, has highlighted four words that cause specific feminisation problems: president, councillor, manager and judge. With the exception of judge, for which no examples of similar word form agentives were present in the corpus, these exhibit anomalous behaviour and, particularly in the case of president and manager, stand out as words that could easily follow the same pattern of feminisation as others in their group if not for gender doubts surfacing when journalists need to refer to women in positions of power – doubts that are simply not present in the cases of women students, or women singers. The case of

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<sup>81</sup> See, e.g. Matthey (2000:68) citing Auclair (1991)

councillor is less clear, as a preference for the base form is evident in Argentina while no definitive choice seems to have been made in Spain. As the word form itself covers similar roles, such as *edil* which show no variation in form, it is unclear why this particular word should vary, and why only in Spain.

The UN guidelines – and the notion of non-sexist guidelines *per se* – must be considered in the light of the word form feminisation consistencies and inconsistencies found in the corpus data. A lively discussion of the merits of such guidelines has taken place in linguistic circles over the last few years with many commentators (e.g. Díaz Hormigo 2007) criticising guideline authors' grammatical knowledge and competence. A review of the main points in this debate, in tandem with a detailed discussion of agentives from this study's corpus, will be the subject of the next chapter.

## **6. Chapter 6. Grammatical Feminisation: Help or Hindrance to Female Visibility?**

Has it ever occurred to you, Winston, that by the year 2050, at the very latest, not a single human being will be alive who could understand such a conversation as we are having now?

(Orwell 2004:68)

### **6.1. Introduction**

The quantitative and qualitative analyses in the previous two chapters have served to show that difficulties of grammatical feminisation are predominantly common to particular societal roles and hence seem to have little to do with purely grammatical considerations of gender morphology. This chapter will therefore expand away from the corpus and focus on the recommendations made in non-sexist guidelines and the common criticisms levelled against them.

As described in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.3.4.2) the initial choice of the UN guidelines for French and Spanish, for the purposes of quantitative analysis, was made for consistency of comparison, as both the source organisation, approximate production date and intended audience could be assumed to be the same. In moving away from corpus analysis, to consider the general nature of feminisation recommendations in a gendered context, a wider source of documents is required and these are available from a variety of sources; for example, local or national government agencies and university regulatory authorities are common publishers. Non-sexist guidelines taken from this wider field have differing ideologies, making it difficult to find cross-border equivalents. However, when reviewing criticisms of their nature, the accusations levelled at them do appear to recur cross-border, and are fairly small in number.

In this chapter, the general criticisms of 'non-sexist writing guidelines' will be considered in the light of the findings from the corpus analysis. To this end, a summary will be given of responses, primarily from the *Académie Française* and *Real Academia Española*, to the notion of agentive feminisation, and to other non-sexist guideline recommendations. Subsequently, a selection of guidelines from each country will be discussed both in the light of these criticisms and taking into account the findings of the corpus analyses carried out in Chapters 4 and 5.

To begin, a historical overview will be given on the development of French and Spanish non-sexist guidelines.

### **6.1.1. Guideline development**

This section will describe the chronological and legal aspects of non-sexist guideline development in the French- and Spanish-speaking worlds.

#### **6.1.1.1. French**

France was a latecomer in the production of Francophone non-sexist guidelines, as commented by Dawes (2003:197), who summarises the development of French guidelines for feminising job titles. She notes that Canada was the first country to publish non-sexist guidelines, as early as 1979, with agentive feminisation recommendations appearing in 1986. Switzerland and Belgium followed suit in the early 1990s. Regarding France itself she points out that, although the Roudy commission studied the question between 1984 and 1986, the *Académie Française* blocked the recommendations. Even in 1997, when the French government included seven female ministers, the *Académie Française* was still vehemently opposed to the use of the feminine determiner with the allegedly masculine word 'minister' (Dawes 2003:197).

Although the French Prime Minister issued a circular in 1998 reiterating the need to feminise agentives<sup>82</sup> and a guide was published in 1999 by the CNRS (Becquer et al. 1999) the fact that *Le Figaro* still appears to have a policy rejecting feminisation suggests that the *Académie Française* has more power over the language in France than the government does.

It is perhaps the simple chronology of francophone 'guidelines' that has given many the impression that feminisation is more advanced a practice outside France, as the corpus data collected here does not seem to prove that the longevity of such guidelines has any serious bearing on actual usage in the press. Many of the anomalies highlighted in the qualitative analysis chapter are from Canada, the first francophone country to publish on the issue.

#### **6.1.1.2. Spanish**

In the Spanish-speaking world, the development of non-sexist language guidelines has been much more recent than has been shown for French. In Spain, a style manual for public administration addressed the issue of sexism in 1990, following on from European Union initiatives at the end of the 1980s (Díaz Hormigo 2007:F3, 8). In Argentina there is no official policy, though a legal review was planned in 2008 and the project then revived in 2011<sup>83</sup>. Using a

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<sup>82</sup> See <http://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/egalite-non-discrimination/fiches-de-synthese-5/article/feminisation-du-langage>, consulted 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

<sup>83</sup> See [http://www.clarin.com/sociedad/Real-Academia-cuestiono-lenguaje-sexista\\_0\\_658134238.html](http://www.clarin.com/sociedad/Real-Academia-cuestiono-lenguaje-sexista_0_658134238.html), consulted 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013, which gives these dates for government-initiated projects.

Google search for Argentinean guidelines, the first document found is actually produced by the UN<sup>84</sup>.

In none of the countries considered for this study are there generally accepted guidelines on non-sexist language, with the French and Spanish National Academies still appearing to be the principal arbiters of 'correct' language. The next section will discuss criticisms of 'non-sexist language' as made by the respective academies and their members.

## **6.2. Criticisms of Non-Sexist Guidelines by the *Academie Française* and *Real Academia Española***

This section will highlight common criticisms of non-sexist guidelines, focussing first on those made by members of the national academies of Spain and France.

### **6.2.1. Grammatical Gender and Sex**

When the two national academies discuss the issue of grammatical gender they are at pains to point out that it is denominated 'masculine' and 'feminine' for reasons unrelated to 'natural' gender:

*Le français connaît deux genres, traditionnellement dénommés masculin et féminin. Ces vocables hérités de l'ancienne grammaire sont impropres. Le seul moyen satisfaisant de définir les genres du français eu égard à leur fonctionnement réel consiste à les distinguer en genres respectivement marqué et non marqué.*

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<sup>84</sup> See <http://www.unic.org.ar/prensa/archivos/doc%20lenguaje.pdf.pdf>, accessed 4<sup>th</sup> November 2013, for a summary guide to non-sexist language produced by the Latin American Regional Centre of the United Nations.



*Le genre dit couramment masculin est le genre non marqué, qu'on peut appeler aussi extensif en ce sens qu'il a capacité à représenter à lui seul les éléments relevant de l'un et l'autre genre. [...] En revanche, le genre dit couramment féminin est le genre marqué or intensif. Or, la marque est privative. Elle affect le terme marqué d'une limitation dont l'autre seul est exempt. A la différence du genre non marqué, le genre marqué, applique aux êtres animés, institue entre les sexes une ségrégation*<sup>85</sup>

[French has two genders, traditionally designated *masculine* and *feminine*. These inherited grammatical terms are inaccurate. The only satisfactory way to label the genders in French by their real function consists in distinguishing them respectively as *marked* and *non-marked*.

[The gender commonly called *masculine* is the *non-marked* gender, which one can also call extensive in the sense that it can represent the elements of the other gender by itself. [...] In contrast, the gender commonly called *feminine* is the *marked* or *intensive* gender. So, the mark is privative. It is the marked term that suffers a limitation from which the other is exempt. In contrast to the *non-marked* gender, the *marked* gender, applied to animate beings, creates a segregation of the sexes.]

This explanation is equally applicable to Spanish, and is utilised by their academicians as well<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>85</sup> From the *Académie's* declaration of 14<sup>th</sup> June 1984, reproduced in <http://www.ciep.fr/chroniq/femi/fem.pdf>

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, the description of 'género' supplied by the Spanish Academy at: <http://lema.rae.es/dpd/srv/search?id=Tr5x8MFOuD6DVTIDBg> (consulted 4<sup>th</sup> May 2014). This is referred to from the 'frequently asked question' on doubling of masculine and feminine plurals, at <http://www.rae.es/consultas/los-ciudadanos-y-las-ciudadanas-los-ninos-y-las-ninas#sthash.o2iOxvVJ.dpuf> (also consulted 4<sup>th</sup> May 2014) where the following statement is made, echoing that above: *El uso genérico del masculino se basa en su condición de término no marcado en la oposición masculino/femenino*. [The generic use of the masculine is based on its condition as the non-marked term in the pairing masculine/feminine].

Rousseau (1998) reminds us that this now *academic* use of the words *masculine* and *feminine* to define grammatical genders probably had a historical basis, in that other language groups use different real-world distinctions when creating gender: for example, he cites animate/inanimate, countable/non-countable as documented alternatives. Arguing that sex has nothing to do with a grammatical gender system that nevertheless distinguishes consistently between males and females in animate contexts is ignoring the historical basis for this very distinction.

In both French and Spanish, original Latin gender distinctions have been extended to new areas using a form of 'local rules'. In French, according to Mathieu (2007) quoting Damourette and Pichon (1927) these include personification, with 'sea' becoming feminine (*la mer*) because it is changeable, like a woman:

*La prédominance en français du processus métaphorique est illustrée alors par le découpage des substances non plus en choses inanimées ou animées mais selon la coupure sexuelle: féminins, masculins (67)*

[The French predominance of the metaphorical is illustrated by the division of substances, no longer into animate and inanimate, but using sexual divisions: feminine and masculine.]

In Spanish, Pountain (2006) notes:

[...] Spanish morphology reveals a number of instances in which it seems that the gender of inanimate nouns is not simply inherited from Latin or assigned in an arbitrary way but is used productively to encode regular semantic distinctions. A well-known and simple example of this is the gender of trees and their fruits, trees in general having the masculine -o inflection and fruits the corresponding -a inflection (*manzano* 'apple tree'/ *manzana* 'apple') (Pountain 2006:19)

Pountain goes on to highlight other regular uses of gender for semantic distinction, such as manual versus electronic tools where the former are masculine and the latter feminine. This practice, unlike the observations on French, is not so much metaphorical as adjectival, with the feminine nouns deriving from an elliptical use of the implicit association with *máquina* for machines (or *empresa* for companies) (Pountain 2006: 25).

Despite the academies' argument that gender is arbitrary, both French and Spanish do seem to have semantically-based historical patterning to the assignation of gender. The problem for women though, as mentioned before, is that whenever presented with a masculine usage they have to determine whether they are intentionally included, implicitly included, or intended to be excluded. Men, of course, never have this problem – and form the majority in the academies. The *Académie Française* continues its homily as follows:

*Quand on dit “tous les hommes sont mortels”, “Cette ville compte 20.000 habitants”, “tous les candidats ont été reçus a l'examen”, etc., le genre non marqué design indifféremment des hommes ou des femmes.*

[When one says “all men are mortal”, “this town has 20,000 inhabitants”, “all the candidates have been considered”, etc., the *non-marked gender* designates both men and women.]

Obviously, one does not expect a town's population to consist of men only, and it is still common usage to designate the human race by the term 'men' when alluding to attributes common to the whole species, but the final example could either be referring to a group of male candidates or a group of mixed candidates – there is no way to know the original intention. Some people may have a mental image of a mixed group on hearing this phrase and others may imagine

only men<sup>87</sup> – the *Académie Française* is effectively saying 'your own prejudices are affecting how you interpret this, nothing grammatical restricts it to men'.

This position, while true to the grammatical spirit of the language, ignores the social position of women, who have traditionally been excluded from 'generic' masculines such as 'the people' or 'citizens' – when referring, for example, to voting rights<sup>88</sup>.

Another issue in French concerns the actual classification of nouns by gender – who determines whether a word such as *professeur* (teacher) is masculine or variably-gendered? If it is variably-gendered then it can appear with feminised adjectives and the feminine determiner, but the *Académie Française* argues that if it is masculine it must appear surrounded by masculine particles. If the classification of nouns into the two categories of 'variably-gendered' and 'masculine' is by word form, then 'ministre', for example, is an ideal candidate for variable-gender. However, many words have traditionally referred to men only, and their word form is now less important to the *Académie Française* than their documented gender (in their own dictionary) hence the argument made for '*madame le ministre*' and the grammatical contortions created by (pregnant) female captains (Yaguello 1989) centre on the dictamen that these are masculine words and not variably-gendered. Dawes notes (2003:204) for variably-gendered nouns that it is common in French to mark gender merely via the determiner. However, for French purists

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<sup>87</sup> For an exposition of stereotyping and mental image of the sex of the referent see, for example, Gygax, Gabriel, Lévy, Pool, Grivel, and Pedrazzini (2012)

<sup>88</sup> France did not give women the vote until after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War (see Blöss & Frickey 1994:44).

*[...] les mots ministre et capitaine ne sont pas des mots épiciens mais plutôt des mots à genre unique qui sont masculins par simple hasard.*  
(Dawes 2003: 205)

[... the words *minister* and *captain* are not variably-gendered but rather single-gendered words that are masculine purely by chance.]

Coincidentally though, many of the words which are 'masculine by chance' happen to denote positions of power (Dawes 2003: 197) as noted also by Houdebine-Gravaud (1998:19), Rey-Debove (1999:60) and Adriaen and King (1991:29) and hence, for purists, these words demand a masculine determiner regardless of the sex of the referent.

The grammatical nature of the epicene, however, differs from Romance language to Romance language. Hence, in Italian, there is a distinction between *epicene* and *ungendered*:

whereas epicenes have only one agreement rule, the one syntactically marked in the word ending and in the article, ungendered words have two agreement rules depending upon the gender of the intended referent.  
(Cacciari, Carreiras & Barbolini Cionini 1997:521)

In French, the opposite is the case, with the epicene being variably-gendered:

*1. Qui désigne aussi bien le mâle que la femelle d'une espèce. 2. Dont la forme ne varie pas selon le genre (enfant)*

[1. which designates equally the male and female of a species. 2. Where the form does not vary with gender (*enfant*: child)] ("Le Petit Robert" 2000:800)

and this is also the case for Spanish:

*[Nombre] común animado que, con un solo género gramatical, masculino o femenino, puede designar al macho o a la hembra indistintamente.*

[common animate noun which, with a single grammatical gender, masculine or feminine, can designate the male or female indistinguishably.] ("Diccionario de la lengua Española" 2000:455)

For Italian, therefore, Cacciari et al (1997) are distinguishing between two types of gender agreement, not two flavours of grammatical gender: in one case the word has a fixed gender and agreement must conform to normal grammatical patterns for feminine or masculine, as appropriate; in the other case, the word can effectively vary in gender depending on context and agreement varies accordingly. The same distinction is true for French and Spanish: the dictionary example given for 'epicene' in French refers to a word which can vary in gender (*enfant* [child (m/f)]) not one with a fixed gender, such as the oft-cited *la sentinelle* [the (f) sentry(f)].

This suggests that in French the polemic nouns – such as *ministre* – are being interpreted as masculine, not variable, though there is no clear reason for this interpretation other than the historical fact that men traditionally held these roles. In Spanish, which allows the determiner to agree with the referent for animate objects, the distinction between epicene and items of variable gender is less pertinent.

Various examples, in a variety of languages, are available to demonstrate that 'low status' titles cannot be *masculinised* from a feminine noun: when men enter traditionally female professions a new word is coined to denote them, this word then sometimes being itself feminised to refer to women in the profession, as it immediately acquires a higher status than the previous version. Illustrations of this are available in Table 35, below:

Original feminine	Masculine	Revised feminine	Language	Cited in	Profession
<i>Levatrice</i>	<i>Ostetrico</i>	ostetrica	Italian	Marcato and Thüne (2001)	Midwife
<i>Modista</i>	<i>Modisto</i>	Modisto (variably-gendered)	Spanish	Nissen (1986)	Fashion designer
<i>Hôtesse de l'air</i>	<i>Agent de bord</i>	Agente de bord	French	Parent (1993)	Airline steward

Table 35: Examples of re-feminised masculines

By analogy, this re-feminisation suggests that 'masculine' titles cannot be feminised, as that would result in an automatic loss of status. From this perspective, feminisations which change the word form are creating a new position, not one parallel to the existing masculine (hence women themselves preferring the base masculine word). The *Académie Française* itself alludes to this in saying:

*Enfin, seul le genre masculin, qui est le genre non marqué (il a en effet la capacité de représenter les éléments relevant de l'un et de l'autre genre), peut traduire la nature indifférenciée des titres, grades, dignités et fonctions. Les termes chevalière, officière (de tel ordre), députée, sénatrice, etc., ne doivent pas être employés.*<sup>89</sup>

[Finally, only masculine gender, which is the unmarked gender (it has in effect the capacity to represent elements relevant to one or other gender) can carry the indifferent nature of titles, grades, honorifics and functions. The terms *Knight (f)*, *Officer (f)* (of a particular order), *Deputy (f)*, *Senator (f)* etc. Should not be used.]

This is very obviously a problem with society, not language. For example, in English the word 'manageress' (though no longer common) was easy to apply to the manager of a dress shop but probably not to a department manager in

<sup>89</sup> See <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/actualites/feminisation.asp>, consulted 8<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

the civil service. Queen Elizabeth II, as was noted occasionally in the Diamond Jubilee year, is the *Duke* of Lancaster, not its Duchess. However, in the arguments propounded for and against feminisation, this issue rarely seems to be raised, purely linguistic points about grammar and lexicography taking centre stage instead.

As has previously been noted, Spanish does not suffer from the important problem of French usage: determiner gender prescription. In Spanish, the grammatical gender of the determiner with an agentive always matches the sex of the referent, so the concept of epicene is more flexible in Spanish. The RAE also acknowledges morphological feminisation: as Bosque says (2012:p8) morphological pairs such as those for engineer (m/f) are widely accepted. In the case of 'judge', however, one can choose to consider the base word (*juez*) as variable or to feminise it morphologically (*jueza*) and many female judges, he feels, are making such a decision for themselves. This member of the academy is hence acknowledging linguistic changes that incorporate feminisation of agentives.

The RAE itself has been gradually admitting feminisations and feminine agreements in its dictionary over the last 20 years (see, e.g. Bengoechea<sup>90</sup> in a response to Bosque's article). In fact, Bengoechea points out in her response that Bosque himself 'broke' the conventions of the academy with regard to grammatical gender in using the masculine adjective *femeninos* [feminine (m)]

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<sup>90</sup> See <http://blogs.elpais.com/mujeres/2012/03/el-informe-de-la-rae-el-error-humano-y-la-evoluci%C3%B3n-de-las-lenguas.html>, consulted 8<sup>th</sup> July 2012.



with the now variable-gendered noun<sup>91</sup> *miembros* [members (m/f)] – when referring exclusively to women members, the correct phrase would be '*miembros femeninas*', as adjectives can agree with the sex of the referent where the noun is variable (but not when it is masculine).

Both Bosque and Bengoechea are acknowledging that language changes, and that it is society itself which changes it – hence the existence of individual and geographical variations. In the case of feminisation, as more women come into previously all-male professions, the agentives, their determiners and adjectival agreements come to reflect this fact; the language evolves and finally the dictionaries – including that of the RAE – catch up. In fact, the next edition of the Spanish Academy's dictionary, available in 2014, will incorporate a number of new feminisations, such as *herrera* for 'blacksmith (f)'<sup>92</sup>.

The classification of previously masculine terms, such as *ministre* or *miembro*, as variably-gendered would both allow feminine agreement in Spanish and the use of the feminine determiner in French, thus resolving issues such as *le capitaine Prieur* and her pregnancy (Dawes 2003:204), without creating anomalies between words of similar form (in Spanish, comparing *estudiante/presidente*, as discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1.3). Some word forms are, however, associated with morphologically derived feminines with a discrete meaning, and another argument used in the feminisation debate

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<sup>91</sup> Bengoechea's article notes that *miembros* is listed in the RAE's dictionary being as of common since the edition of 2001. In the 1992 edition, it was listed as masculine.

<sup>92</sup> See *El País* from 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013 (pp. 36-7 in print): [http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2013/11/24/actualidad/1385324034\\_063421.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2013/11/24/actualidad/1385324034_063421.html).

regards feminised forms supposedly 'blocked' from usage by their subsequent 'ambiguity'.

### 6.2.2. Blocking

Various morphological feminisations, it is claimed, are 'blocked' because the feminine version of the word form already exists, perhaps with an inanimate referent. Dawes (2003) elaborates some fairly ridiculous examples of this, including:

*La féminisation de plombier en plombière créerait une confusion gênante avec une plombières, « glace à la vanille garnie de fruits confits » (NPR 1702b, plombières), nommée d'après la station thermale Plombières-les-Bains où elle aurait été inventée.*

[The feminisation of 'plumber' would create terrible confusion with 'plumbers', "vanilla ice garnished with glacé fruits" named after the spa *Plombières-les-Bains* where it was invented.] (Dawes 2003:201) [NPR: Nouveau Petit Robert ("Le Nouveau Petit Robert" 2001)]

She continues:

*On oublie que de nombreux cas de polysémie existent déjà au masculin. Un dépanneur est un « professionnel (mécanicien, électricien, etc). chargé de dépanner » ou une « épicerie qui reste ouverte au-delà des heures d'ouverture des autres commerces » (NPR 592b, dépanneur). Les exemples se multiplient tant au masculin (distributeur, facteur, financier, finisseur, serveur) qu'au féminin (cuisinière, jardinière, souffleuse). Puisque toute ambiguïté possible est résolue par le contexte, il s'avère illégitime de refuser la féminisation par crainte de confusion polysémique. (Dawes 2003:201)*

[One forgets that numerous cases of polysemy already exist in the masculine. A servicer (*dépanneur*) is a “professional (mechanic, electrician) charged with a repair” or a “grocery which is open longer hours than other shops”. There are as many masculine examples (distributor, instrument maker, financier, finisher, server) as feminine (cook, gardener, blower). As all ambiguity is removed by the context, it is illegitimate to refuse feminisation though a fear of creating polysemic confusion.]

Here, Dawes not only highlights the unlikelihood of misinterpretation in the feminisation of animate masculine nouns supposedly ‘blocked’ by inanimate feminisations, but cites several examples of masculine inanimate lexemes that are not considered at all problematic despite ostensibly suffering from the same problem.

In Spanish, Diaz Hormigo (2007), taking definitions from the 2003 edition of the Spanish Academy’s dictionary, gives the following reason for rejecting *sargenta* (sergeant) as a feminisation of *sargento*:

[...] *sargenta no es la forma femenina de sargento sino que designa a la ‘religiosa lega de la Orden de Santiago’, a la ‘mujer corpulenta, hombruna y de dura condición’, a la ‘alabarda que llevaba el sargento’ o a la ‘mujer del sargento’* (12)

[*sergeant* (f) is not the feminine form of *sergeant* (m) but designates ‘a lay sister of the Order of Santiago’, ‘a tough, stout woman with a manly appearance’, ‘a sergeant’s halberd’ or ‘a sergeant’s wife’]

Performing a Google search for *la sargenta* in late 2013<sup>93</sup> it appears that none of the above-cited definitions represents common usage for the term.

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<sup>93</sup> A Google search for “la sargenta” with the advanced search option for language set to ‘Spanish’, on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2013, gave several proper names using the phrase (e.g. *el Valle de*

The final definition referred to does recall the historic tendency to refer to wives of officials by a feminised version of the masculine agentive. Citing the 2001 edition of the Spanish Academy's dictionary (DRAE), Calero Fernandez (2004a) notes that this persists into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:

*En **barbero**<sup>1</sup>, **ra**, el sustantivo femenino se define en exclusiva como “Mujer del barbero”, sin dejar espacio a la actividad laboral, que es reservada únicamente a los hombres. (Calero Fernández 2004a:302)*

[In barber (m), barber (f), the feminine substantive is exclusively defined as 'wife of the barber' without any room for her professional participation, reserved exclusively for men]

Reviewing the examples of non-feminisation elicited from the corpus, it is clear that none of these would be subject to 'blocking': for example, nobody today would assume a feminised version of 'judge' referred, not to the incumbent, but to his wife. As can be seen (refer to footnote 93) a feminised version of *sergeant* is starting to appear in news articles referring to female sergeants, though no instances of this usage were found in the original corpus for this study, so it seems unlikely this is causing confusion with the incumbent's wife – or battle-axe.

The final, common argument against feminisation asks readers to consider instances where men are referred to via feminine agentives. This will be discussed below.

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*la Sargenta* in Fuerteventura) and, in later pages, some references to female sergeants, such as “La sargenta Karla Ortiz, de la policía del aeropuerto” in a news story from a Mexican television station

(<http://transmision2.unotv.com/wps/portal/unotv/unonoticias/internacional/detalle/Explosion-en-aeropuerto-de-LA-causa-demoras>).

### 6.2.3. Existing single-gendered nouns

In criticising a 'feminist' desire for inclusive language, reference is also made to existing single-gendered nouns that have not been controversial in the past when referring to people of both sexes. For example, in French: *la sentinelle* (the sentry) and *le témoin* (the witness) are used for male and female referents. By citing these, it is supposedly shown that women should treat the newly opened 'masculine' roles they accede to in the same vein, and be as content with being called 'the (m) minister' as 'the (m) witness'.

Bullock (2001) notes:

it is significant that most of the historical debate over them ['hybrid nouns'] has centered on grammatically feminine titles, '*sa majesté*', '*sa sainteté*', '*la recrue*', '*la sentinelle*', '*la trompette*', that generally refer to males only, and so, there was very little question of their agreement properties.

[...] With hybrid nouns, the choice of either pronoun can be made on a semantic basis (consistent with the sex of the referent) (Bullock 2001:705)

so it is uncontroversial to call the king *sa majesté* [majesty(f)] and refer to him anaphorically as '*il*' [him] in the same sentence, while recent debate suggests the same is not true for '*le capitaine*' [the (m) captain(m)] and '*elle*' [she] (Fleischman 1997). However, the distinction made between 'the role' and 'the incumbent' by the academy when referring to '*la nature indifférenciée des titres, grades, dignités et fonctions*'<sup>94</sup> (see page 174 for the full quotation) would suggest that 'majesty' should take the anaphorical pronoun 'she' even when referring to a king, not a queen. This raises a completely different question, so far unaddressed, which is: to what extent is a role constant, and unaffected by

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<sup>94</sup> See <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/actualites/feminisation.asp>, consulted 8<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

the person enacting it? In the case of a French king, there is only ever one at a time, so the person and the role are interchangeable. In the case of ministers, captains – or even architects – the person has aspired to the role but is only one of many contemporaneous incumbents. In the opposing case of 'witness' or 'sentinel' there is a third degree of association where the role, and not the individual performing it, is prominent – being a sentinel is something a soldier would do for a few hours in the day, whilst being a soldier for the whole of the time of enlistment. Similarly, the role of 'witness' has pertinence in one particular event – be it a criminal act or the signing of a contract – and does not affect any other roles associated with the same person, such as 'traffic warden' or 'solicitor'. There are therefore 'degrees' of association that could be used to classify agentives based on longevity – with 'king for life' at one end and 'witness for a few minutes' at the other. Most job titles would be somewhere in the middle; political appointments on the more 'temporary' side, as once voted out of office one can no longer self-identify as a councillor, member of parliament – or even president. It is perhaps significant, in this context, that roles such as 'witness', 'sentinel', 'victim' etc. are typically epicene, suggesting the gender of the referent is in some way irrelevant to their semantics.

An interesting anomaly identified in the corpus data relates to the word *soprano*, originally from the Italian, identifying the highest vocal range in classical music. Although normally sung by a woman, in English it can be qualified, as in 'boy soprano', to distinguish the singer's sex within an all-male church tradition where pre-pubescent boys sing the highest parts.

In the Canadian data, reference was made both to:

1. *Le soprano Maria Knapik*<sup>95</sup> [the (m) soprano Maria Knapik]

and:

2. *La soprano Anja Kampe*<sup>96</sup> [the (f) soprano Anja Kampe]

where (1) was sourced from *Le Droit* and (2) from *La Presse*, though both reviews are by male authors.

According to Lyster (2006), 93% of the 312 French words ending /o/ are masculine, and there is also a tendency for foreign words imported to French to be assigned masculine gender (for example, *le weekend*) making the word form for *soprano* strongly masculine-gendered. However, with the exception of choirboys, classical sopranos are female and are closely identified with their profession in the same way that instrumentalists are identified by playing their instrument (e.g. 'the pianist'). This contrasts with the above-cited French (counter)example of a man called by a feminine noun, *la sentinelle* (the sentry): whereas sentry duty is a role temporarily assigned to a soldier, being a soprano is a career choice and the singer is identified by the agentive. It is worthy of note that the author of the article containing *le soprano* has no problem referring to her as *elle* [she].

As can be imagined, there is no common, grammatical feature related to how 'permanently' an agentive applies to an individual – for example, *témoin* and *sentinelle* have no morphological similarities.

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<sup>95</sup> See <http://www.lapresse.ca/le-droit/arts-et-spectacles/201004/13/01-4270139-loffrande-polonaise-de-loslo.php> consulted 7th October 2013.

<sup>96</sup> See <http://www.lapresse.ca/arts/musique/musique-classique/201004/20/01-4272216-lanaudiere-2010-chopin-schumann-et-dautres-grands-noms.php> consulted 7th October 2013.

To explore whether it is possible to use morphology effectively within non-sexist guidelines, the remainder of this chapter will review example publications for French and Spanish in more detail.

### 6.3. Guidelines in review

In this section, feminisation recommendations from a variety of actual guidelines will be presented. Beginning with Spanish, a recent review by Academy member Ignacio Bosque will first be summarised and the guidelines he cites will be prioritised in the subsequent discussion.

#### 6.3.1. Spanish

On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2012, *El País* published a four-page article in its supplement *Domingo*<sup>97</sup>, written by Ignacio Bosque of the Spanish language academy, criticising the publication of 'non sexist' guidelines, and 'reviewing' nine of them, published variously by governmental or university organisations since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. His article attacks the basis, content and authors of such guides saying the authors lack linguistic credentials and 'miss the point' of grammatical gender; the content is inconsistent between different publications and dismissing the idea that societal sexism can or should be addressed through language reform. His article prompted weeks of subsequent debate within this and other Spanish national papers, though ironically *El País* itself published the following text in a news article about the Salafist impact on the Egyptian elections only a few weeks later:

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<sup>97</sup> See [http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2012/03/02/actualidad/1330717685\\_771121.html](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2012/03/02/actualidad/1330717685_771121.html).



*Es fácil identificar a sus numerosos adherentes por su aspecto: largas barbas, túnicas tradicionales, y negrísimos velos integrales para sus mujeres.*

[It is easy to identify their (the Salafists) numerous adherents: long beards, traditional tunics and full black veils for their wives]<sup>98</sup>

Such phraseology is indisputably sexist, implying women practice Salafist dress practices only because their men expect it of them, and denying the existence of women Salafists 'by conviction' instead of 'by marriage'. From the content of his article, it appears Bosque would agree on this point but would stress that there is no linguistic or grammatical need for the author of the above quotation to have phrased it the way it appears – the author's prejudices about Salafism are undisguised here, and it is not the Spanish language that causes the sexism. However, Bosque's text suggests that he feels all examples of sexist language come down to sexism on the part of the author, with the language itself being an innocent victim. He therefore feels there is no issue with the very obvious problem of women's visibility in 'unmarked' plurals because women should just assume themselves to be included, as prescriptive grammar allows them to be. This is amusingly illustrated by Bengoechea in the following story:

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<sup>98</sup> See

[http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2012/04/26/actualidad/1335459716\\_508183.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2012/04/26/actualidad/1335459716_508183.html).

*Primero la niña aprenderá que se dirigen a ella llamándola "niña", por tanto si oye frases como "los niños [...] pueden ir al recreo", permanecerá sentada en su pupitre [...] entonces le explicará que cuando dice "niños" se está refiriendo también a las niñas. Pero [...] [l]a hilaridad de sus compañeros ante su mano alzada le puede hacer comprender [...] que hubiera sido mejor no darse por aludida en frases del tipo: "Los niños que quieran formar parte del equipo de fútbol que levanten la mano".* (Bengoechea 2005:8)

[First, the girl learns that she referred to as 'girl', so when she hears phrases like 'the boys can go for their break' she stays at her desk; then it is explained that when one says 'boys' it means 'girls' as well. But the hilarity of her classmates when she raises her hand lets her know that it would have been better not to consider herself included in phrases such as 'which boys want to join the football team?']

Perhaps because Bosque is male, the problem of knowing whether or not he is included in phrases such as *los padres* [the fathers/parents] or *los ciudadanos* [the citizens/the male citizens] does not arise. Female respondents to his article were divided on this point, with some obviously following his advice and treating all masculine plurals as generic whilst others felt there was a genuine problem of interpretation. From an outsider's point of view, perhaps what the Spanish language really needs is not new and complicated ways of referring to mixed-gender groups but a new way of referring to men-only groups, as what appears to be 'missing' from the current Spanish system of grammar is a 'marked' masculine plural.

In the present study plurals are not considered, as all the data collected refers to named individuals, but the issue of marked and unmarked masculines is still being highlighted in both the French and Spanish results.

The guidelines themselves can be unhelpful in their generalisations regarding feminisation and there are sometimes grammatically preferential options, including that of considering the original word to be 'common' or 'variable-gendered' rather than 'masculine' in gender. In French this does seem more problematic than in Spanish, as prescriptive grammar states that French determiners must match the gender of their nouns, not the sex of their referents, so unless there is general agreement that previously 'men-only' role-nouns are not actually masculine but merely considered masculine for historical social reasons, then using feminine determiners will still cause controversy in some circles – as appears to be the case for *Le Figaro*.

Below, a selection of guidelines will be summarised in respect of the feminisation requirements they recommend. This will begin in Spanish, with the nine guides Bosque cited in his 2012 article from *El País*<sup>99</sup>. The review will consider these in the context of the corpus findings discussed in Chapter 5.

The following sections relate to the nine guidelines critiqued by Bosque, produced by various Government and University bodies inside Spain. They are listed below by the publishing organisation.

### **6.3.1.1. Valencian Regional Government**

The guidelines document produced by the Valencian regional government (Giner Arbiol, Igualada Portalés, & Sanchís Pérez 2009) under the auspices of their social welfare council begins with the warning, similar to that made by

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<sup>99</sup> See

[http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2012/03/02/actualidad/1330717685\\_771121.html#sumario\\_5](http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2012/03/02/actualidad/1330717685_771121.html#sumario_5)

consulted 21<sup>st</sup> October 2012.

Bosque himself (and described in the introduction to Section 6.3.1) that sexism is in the mouth of the speaker, not in the language itself, defining linguistic sexism as: '*el uso discriminatorio que se hace del lenguaje por razón de sexo*' (Giner Abriol et al. 2009: 13) [the discriminatory use made of language for reasons of sex]. One suggestion they make to identify whether a usage is potentially discriminatory is to fully feminise it: for example, the sign 'staff only' could be written with 'staff' in the masculine, i.e. the 'generic' masculine (*Acceso sólo permitido a funcionarios* [Access only permitted to *staff* (m)]), but if, when thinking about the same phrase in the feminine (*Acceso sólo permitido a funcionarias* [Access only permitted to *staff* (f)]), it seems to exclude men then the 'generic' version may not be as generic as it first appeared and should be rephrased, using the word 'personnel', for example (*Acceso permitido sólo al personal funcionario* [Access only permitted to *personnel on the staff*]) (Giner Abriol et al. 2009: 13).

In discussing the issue of agentive feminisation, they stress that visibility should be accorded to women in their professional life and suggest this can be achieved by morphological feminisation. They include examples where both variably-gender and morphological feminisation are available as options, highlighting that feminine determiners should be used for visibility in cases of epicene nouns.

In terms of the findings from Chapter 3 of the present study, they suggest some multiplicities already exist in words ending *-ente* and cite 'president' and 'assistant' as examples (Giner Abriol et al. 2009: 27). For terms ending *-ante* they suggest these are variably-gendered, and recommend only the determiner

is feminised. However, interestingly, they cite *gobernanta* [governor (f)] as an exception where morphological feminisation is commonly seen.

For items ending –/ they note that some morphological feminisation is visible (Giner Abriol et al. 2009: 36-7) but do not explicitly recommend it, suggesting as a general rule that this word ending denotes a variable-gender. They also cite the word ‘judge’ (*juez/jueza*) in both variably-gendered and feminised versions, suggesting both are acceptable (Giner Abriol et al. 2009: 37).

This guide’s résumé of usages, as is clear from the above summary, is not prescriptive – the object of the recommendations is to sensitise the reader and present them with alternatives, not to formulate rules for them. As such, it reflects the same findings as in the present study’s corpus, such as the multiple versions of ‘judge’ or the parallel terms for political roles such as ‘president’, ‘councillor’ or ‘official’. This guide is not attempting to influence a writer’s choice between such alternatives, but to stress the need for them to identify female incumbents using any available linguistic resources.

### **6.3.1.2. Madrid Polytechnical University**

The guide produced by the *Universidad Politécnica de Madrid* (Madrid 2009) says the following about grammatical gender as applied to specific referents: *[...] se debe evitar el uso exclusivo del masculino para nombres que tienen su correspondiente en femenino, usando los artículos en concordancia al género* [the use of the masculine version of names that have a feminine should be avoided, with the articles agreeing in grammatical gender] (Madrid 2009: 18)

It contains no generic recommendations for feminisation, the only example given of gender morphology being represented by the pair

*ginecólogo/ginecóloga*. It does contain a list of 'non-sexist University terminology' (Madrid 2009: 21) that includes both *presidenta* and *gerenta* but, strangely for an educational establishment, does not reference *estudiante* in either the variably-gendered or feminised versions. Elsewhere (Madrid 2009: 15) it states that words ending in *-ente*, *-ista* and *-astra* are neutral (variably-gendered) which may be one reason for Bosque's criticism that the non-sexist guidelines he reviewed fail to give clear guidance to their readers and showed no consensus regarding approaches to feminisation.

### **6.3.1.3. Confederation of Workers' Trade Union Commissions**

The Spanish Trades Union guidelines (Bravo Sueskun & Antón Fernández 2010) offer varied examples but these are not strictly classified, hence no general rules are formulated. In the section entitled 'recommendations' (Bravo Sueskun & Antón Fernández 2010: 68) it discusses several items highlighted in the current corpus, stating, for example, that word forms ending in *-ante* and *-ente* are often treated as variably-gendered but sometimes feminised, with a consequent doubling of the vocabulary as it relates to women (e.g. *presidente/presidenta* as synonyms) both for this word form and for several ending in *-l*, such as *concejal/concejala*, also encountered in the corpus.

This guide also highlights the existence of 'real generics' (or epicenes, Bravo Sueskun & Antón Fernández 2010: 69) in which category it cites *víctima* [victim], *persona* [person] and *criatura* [small child/creature] – presumably *testigo* [witness] should also fall in this category (see Bengoechea 2006a:141 for the suggestion that *testiga* was popularised only after Almodóvar's 1988 film 'Women on the verge of a nervous breakdown') though significantly the items cited all terminate in *-a*.

#### 6.3.1.4. Granada University

The guide from Granada University (Unidad de Igualdad de la Universidad de Granada After 2008), in a discussion of agentives, critiques the discrepancies evidenced in words terminating in *-ente* but notes that some definite differences in prestige exist, specifically citing *gobernanta* (governess) as a profession less esteemed than its masculine equivalent (Unidad de Igualdad de la Universidad de Granada After 2008: 10) since *gobernante* (governor) is ‘one who governs’ whilst the feminine version refers simply to a housekeeper.

This guide also cites the case of *modisto/modista* which has been discussed elsewhere (see, for example, Section 2.2.2.2 and Table 35) in the context of masculinisation and the difficulties of re-feminising masculinised professional vocabulary.

This begins to bring us away from language and back to society, suggesting as it does that the problem with feminisations (and masculinisations) is intimately related to the prestige of the position referred to and not the grammatical gender of other words with that termination.

#### 6.3.1.5. University of Murcia

Produced by the University of Murcia’s equality unit (2011) this guide gives an extensive list of professions, preceded by the comment:

*El hecho de que a algunas personas les resulten extraños términos como ingeniera, ministra, concejala, médica... no se debe a que sean incorrectos, sino a la falta de costumbre de escucharlos y nombrarlos. El uso continuado de los mismos hará que deje de provocarnos extrañeza. Podemos y debemos utilizar el femenino en la denominación de las profesiones.* (Murcia 2011: 8)

[The fact that some people find strange terms such as *engineer (f)*, *minister (f)*, *councillor (f)*, *medic (f)*... is not because these are incorrect but because they are unused to hearing them and naming them. Continued use of these will make them less strange. **We can and should use feminines in the naming of professions.**]

A selection of examples given (Murcia 2011: 8-9) is reproduced in Tables 36 and 37 below:

MASCULINO	FEMENINO	
abogado	abogada	[barrister]
actor	actriz	[actor]
administrador	administradora	[administrator]
capitán	capitana	[captain]
dependiente	dependienta	[assistant]
guardián	guardiana	[guardian]
juez	jueza	[judge]
presidente	presidenta	[president]

Table 36: terms with feminised versions taken from the University of Murcia guide

Invariant term	
almirante	[admiral]
atleta	[athlete]
canciller	[chancellor]
corresponsal	[correspondent]
deportista	[sportsperson]
estudiante	[student]
miembro	[member]
paciente	[patient]
piloto	[pilot]
portavoz	[spokesperson]
soldado	[soldier]
testigo	[witness]
viajante	[traveller/agent]

Table 37: Casos De Igual Terminación Para Los Dos Géneros [cases where the word-ending is the same for both genders]



As can be seen by comparing the word forms in these two tables, there are no rules present here – *soldado* (soldier) and *testigo* (witness) from Table 37 have the same form as *abogado* (solicitor) in Table 36, and although *presidente* (president) is feminised in Table 36, both *estudiante* (student) and *paciente* (patient) appear as invariant in Table 37. No further explanations are given within the document.

### 6.3.1.6. National Distance Learning University

This guide (Oficina de Igualdad 2007) refers readers to the document published by the *Instituto de la Mujer* (IM) from which the extracts below are taken, quoted in full as they are particularly interesting in the light of the corpus data findings:

*La lengua, siempre en tránsito, presenta también a veces la posibilidad de denominar una misma realidad de maneras distintas. Así, en la actualidad, se constata que conviven las formas “la jueza” y “la juez” (ya por fortuna casi totalmente abandonada la forma “el juez” para referirse a una magistrada; algo parecido ocurre con las denominaciones “la jefa” y “la jefe”). Lo importante, a mi entender, es que las dos recogen el hecho cierto de que la profesional es una mujer, no la convierten en una travesti como hacía una denominación como “el juez”*

[Language, always in flux, sometimes also presents the opportunity to name the same reality in different ways. So now we can see the forms 'the (f) judge (f)' and 'the (f) judge (m)' coexisting (thankfully the form 'the (m) judge (m)' to refer to a female magistrate has now been almost totally abandoned; something similar is occurring with the forms “the (f) chief (f)” and “the (f) chief (m)”). The important thing, from my point of view, is that the two forms recognise the certain fact that the professional is a woman, not converting her into a transvestite as happens with denominations such as 'the (m) judge (m)'] (Oficina de Igualdad 2007: 12)

This refreshingly open-minded guide reminds us that language changes, that it takes time to get used to new words and collocations, and that the important

target is female visibility. Perhaps it is telling that Bosque, finds this openness disconcerting and contradictory.

Concerning *-ente*, the guide has the following comments:

*En alguna ocasión, parece que lo que va de -ente a -enta es el prestigio y la valoración social de la profesión (asistente (al gobierno, etc)., asistenta). (Oficina de Igualdad 2007: 21)*

[Sometimes it appears that the *-ente -enta* distinction comes down to prestige, and the social status of the profession (assistant (m) (to the government etc)., assistant (f)).]

with similar comments regarding *-ante*:

*[H]ay que decir que en las denominaciones acabadas en -enta/-ente y -anta/-ante se perciben oscilaciones, de manera que a veces la letra final es -a y otras -e. También se comprueba que la situación no es estática y que el uso y la frecuencia modifica estos finales.*

[It has to be said that nouns ending *-enta/-ente* and *-anta/-ante* show variations, such that sometimes the final letter is -a and other times -e. It is also obvious that the situation is not static and that usage and frequency modifies these endings]

### 6.3.1.7. Malaga University

The Malaga guide (Medina Guerra et al. 2002) also notes the existence of multiple feminised forms but, unlike other guides, it insists on morphological feminisation:

*Pese a la regla gramatical que dice que el artículo debe adoptar el género del nombre al que acompaña, la incorporación de la mujer a ámbitos de la realidad que hasta hace poco tiempo le estaban vetados ha generado en el uso estructuras agramaticales como la abogado, una médico, la citada arquitecto, etc. que ponen de manifiesto un estado intermedio hacia la definitiva creación del término flexionado con la terminación femenina -a («Los oficios, profesiones y cargos de responsabilidad», págs. 75-82).*

[Despite the grammatical rule that states the article should adopt the gender of the name it accompanies, the incorporation of women into areas they previously were banned from has generated agrammatical usages such as the (f) solicitor (m), a (f) medic (m), the (f) cited (f) architect (m), etc. that manifestly show an intermediate state on the way to the creation of a definitive terminal inflexion with the feminine ending –a (see “Titles, professions and positions of responsibility”, pages 75-82)] (Medina Guerra et al. 2002: 39)

This suggests that the authors believe Spanish is currently at a halfway house before full morphological feminisation, and that the current ‘mixed’ usage of lexemes grammatically masculine in *form* with a feminine determiner is an aberration that will cease as more of these words are feminised. This seems at odds with the common Spanish agentive suffix *-ista* (e.g. *periodista*, ‘journalist’) that is variably-gendered but feminine in appearance – the authors do not appear to be suggesting, for example, that this should change to *periodisto* for a male journalist. Their suggestion that prescriptive grammar requires the gender agreement of article and noun is anomalous in terms of common Spanish usage, where determiners always agree with the sex of animate referents – the rule given here is more consistent with French than Spanish prescriptive grammar.

Again at odds with other guides, the Malaga document suggests some items should remain masculine because of ‘blocking’ – in this case, blocking by an

existing, low-prestige feminisation, not by a word with a completely different meaning as was discussed earlier. The example given here is of 'secretary', where the feminine version is accepted as applying only to 'subordinates':

*De este modo, se reserva la secretario para designar a un alto cargo de la Administración, mientras que se emplea la secretaria para la encargada de tareas subalternas («Los duales aparentes y los vocablos ocupados», págs. 59-62).*

In this way, the word 'the (f) secretary (m)' is reserved to designate an elevated administrative post while 'the (f) secretary (f)' designates subordinate tasks (see pages 59-62)] (Medina Guerra et al. 2002: 39)

It also gives examples of feminised variable-gender words (Medina Guerra et al. 2002: 77) stating that these are sanctioned by the *Real Academia Española* with the exception of the item asterisked:

Base form	Feminised as	
<i>conserje</i>	<i>conserja*</i>	[concierge]
<i>gerente</i>	<i>gerenta</i>	[manager]
<i>Juez</i>	<i>jueza</i>	[judge]
<i>jefe</i>	<i>jefa</i>	[head/chief]
<i>presidente</i>	<i>presidenta</i>	[president]

Table 38: examples of feminisation where the word form does not require it.

but then goes on to state that the only reason for rejecting the asterisked lexeme, as compared to the others, is that it 'sounds bad' (Medina Guerra et al. 2002: 77) – echoing the words of Hampares (1976) almost 40 years earlier.

In deference to the perceived problems of feminisation, the authors continue:

*En definitiva, para la masculinización o feminización de los términos por medio del morfema de género no parecen existir normas fijas, lo que desconcierta y crea inseguridad en la comunidad hablante. Esta vacilación es más evidente en las palabras que terminan, por ejemplo, en -ente, -ante, -al, o -z.*

[The masculinisation or feminisation of terms via the morpheme of gender definitely does not show any fixed norms, which makes it disconcerting and creates doubts in the speaking community. This variation is more evident in words that end, for example, in -ente, -ante, -al, or -z.]

highlighting exactly the morphologies that have been seen to cause problems in the current study's corpus.

*Ejemplos:*

la asistente	la asistenta	[assistant/ social worker]
la ayudante	la ayudanta	[assistant/ deputy]
la juez	la jueza	[judge]
la oficial	la oficiala	[official]
la practicante	la practicante	[practitioner]

Table 39: Feminisations without fixed rules.

(Medina Guerra et al. 2002:78-79)

This highlights again the double form *juez/jueza* encountered in the current corpus. They continue, again recalling other commentators:

*A esto hay que añadir los problemas planteados por la asimetría provocada por los llamados duales aparentes («Los duales aparentes y los vocablos ocupados», págs. 59-62), esto es, que el femenino tenga connotaciones inferiores, peyorativas o insultantes, o que, en el mejor de los casos, se haya ido empleando para nombrar a la esposa de quien ejerce realmente la profesión.*

[Here we have to add the problems presented by the asymmetry created by so-called apparent duals (“apparent duals and occupied lexemes”, pages 59-62) that is, that the feminine tends to have connotations of inferiority, is pejorative or insulting, or that in the majority of cases, it has been used to name the spouse of the person who really holds the position.] (Medina Guerra et al. 2002: 78-9)

Appendix 1 (Medina Guerra et al. 2002: 97 onwards) sanctions both forms for ‘judge’ and ‘president’, but the authors cite a number of examples (Medina Guerra et al. 2002: 59) that show unequal or pejorative feminisations, such as *hombre/mujer público/a* which can be translated as ‘public figure’ for the masculine and ‘prostitute’ for the feminine, showing a sexualisation of the feminine frequently present in English: e.g. *master/mistress* as cited by Miller & Swift (1989), and see also the reference from Romaine (1999), before the introduction to Chapter 2.

A final word from this guide on how new feminisations can be accepted as parallel to the original masculine: the word for ‘mayoress’ (*alcaldesa*) has, according to the authors (Medina Guerra et al. 2002:61), now been accepted as referring to a woman holding the office of mayor and not to the office-holder’s wife. As more women move into previously masculine roles, the authors express the hope that this parallel usage of feminisations will become accepted without pejoration occurring. To quote Hampares again, stressing once more that this quotation is from 1976:

*"no suena bien,"* [does not sound good] [...] only means that they have not heard the feminine form with enough frequency or consistency to make it sound natural. But how will these nouns ever sound natural in the feminine if women themselves do not use them? (Hampares 1976:108)

### 6.3.1.8. Summary of Spanish guides

Bengoechea et al. (2009) state:

*Se van produciendo realizaciones que dejan entrever que la función “neutralizadora” y no marcada del género gramatical masculino empieza a encontrar dificultades y a trastornarse en un mundo discursivo cada vez más feminizado. Se puede percibir en los siguientes hechos:*

*La etiqueta identificativa, sea cargo, clase o función, se tiende a poner en femenino para mujeres individuales (e.g. actuó de presidenta), lo que significa que el femenino (o un sustantivo común con determinante o adjetivo en femenino) se utiliza ya con frecuencia para referirse a la función del cargo, o a una clase compuesta por varios miembros.*

[Effects are being produced that show the 'neutralising', unmarked function of masculine gender is getting difficult to realise in a more and more feminised discourse world. One can see this in the following points:

the identifying label, as role, class or function, tends to become feminine for women (e.g. acting as president (f)) which shows the feminine (or common noun with determiner and adjectives in the feminine) is increasingly utilised to refer to the function itself or a class composed of various members] (Bengoechea et al. 2009:118)

The authors of this report cite the following barriers to the more widespread feminisation of agentives, some of which will be encountered again in the discussion of French:

- Spell-checkers (Bengoechea et al. 2009: 29)
- The RAE and other conservative elements reactionary to change (Bengoechea et al. 2009: 59)

which lead, even for those open to change, to:

- Doubts about the 'correct' form of feminisation (Bengoechea et al. 2009: 30) which include whether particular items can be considered of variable-gender.

In Spanish, as mentioned earlier (see particularly the quote from Bengoechea (2005) in Section 6.3.1) the main problematic arises with pluralisation, a debate outside the parameters of the current study's corpus.

Members of the public also note the inconsistencies of feminisation, for example a blog commentary at *El Mundo's* site<sup>100</sup>

*Estamos ya acostumbrados a decir la presidenta. Pero debería ser la presidente (la que preside). Porque decimos la estudiante (la que estudia) y no la estudianta, la oyente (la que oye) y no la oyenta, etc. La -e precisamente trata por igual a ambos géneros, así que presidenta está de más.*

[we are already accustomed to saying *la presidenta*. But it should be *la presidente* (she who presides). Because we say *la estudiante* (she who studies) not *la estudianta*, *la oyente* (she who listens) not *la oyenta*, etc. The -e treats both genders equally, so *presidenta* is overkill.]

The commentator here is making a point exactly mirrored by the corpus data – that feminisation is being used unnecessarily to create a 'new' job title: one that may not exactly match the existing masculine version. For example, when Cristina Fernández de Kirchner first became president of Argentina, succeeding her husband, it was widely suggested that he was still the 'real' president, so giving her a different title may have (unconsciously?) served to highlight the idea she was not doing the same job as he had done previously. As mentioned

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<sup>100</sup> See [http://www.elmundo.es/social/usuarios/lo\\_que\\_hay\\_que\\_leer/](http://www.elmundo.es/social/usuarios/lo_que_hay_que_leer/) consulted April 2012.



above (see Table 35) when men enter predominantly female professions they often take a new role-name which is then frequently re-feminised to attempt to retain female parity. Unfortunately, it is a historical fact in many societies that males have more prestige than females, so a male role is often considered more prestigious than a female one<sup>101</sup>.

It seems that the non-sexist recommendations of the guidelines may well be contributing to the belittling of women instead of promoting their visibility. Given the historical tendency to assign prestige to the male, feminisation of agentives may be counter-productive unless it does follow previous patterns – hence, as *estudiante* is not feminised there is no reason why *presidente* should be, as the determiner will make visible the sex of the referent in Spanish usage.

Despite Bosque's criticisms, the Spanish guidelines he critiques are not intending to create the type of prescriptive rules that the RAE is used to – the majority are just suggesting the 'visibility' of women be linguistically encoded whilst attempting to sensitise their readership to the potential problems that ill-chosen language may cause in public- or educational-administration.

All of the guides highlight one issue that has been significantly noted within the corpus: multiplicity of feminised forms. The Malaga guide (Medina Guerra et al. 2002) is stronger in its wording than some others in championing the option of morphological feminisation, but even this warns of the perils of pejoration and

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<sup>101</sup> Examples include: the distinction that has arisen in English between *master* and *mistress* over the centuries, highlighted by Miller & Swift (1989:145); generic terms becoming derogatory when applied only to females, as shown by Romaine (1999:94); sexual vocabulary asymmetry for men and women researched in both French (Guiraud 1978) and English (Stanley 1977).

suggests full feminisation must *follow* women into professions, rather than being dictated upon before they are present.

### 6.3.2. French

As can be seen from the first section of this chapter (Section 6.1.1) the *Académie Française* does seem to pose more problems to language reformers than are found in Spanish, as their prescriptive grammar states that French determiners must match the *gender* of their nouns, not the sex of their referents, so unless there is general agreement that nouns for previously 'men-only' roles are not actually masculine but merely considered masculine for historical social reasons, then using feminine determiners will still cause controversy in some circles – as appears to be the case for *Le Figaro* (See, for example, Section 5.4.1). In this section, a review will be made of how French guidelines attempt to address issues of grammatical gender.

#### 6.3.2.1. Locating French guidelines

It is noticeable that while an internet search for 'non sexist guidelines' in Spanish yields dozens of results, an equivalent search in French, for documents published in Canada or France, yields little official work. The Canadian University of Saint-Boniface<sup>102</sup>, based in Manitoba, is the first Canadian *Google* reference, followed by the UNESCO 1999 document (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al.) as the first 'official' guide applicable to France.

The official government recommendations for French feminisations (Becquer et al. 1999; 1986) use substantially the same feminisation strategies as the UN guidelines cited in the current study (Desprez-Bouanchaud et al. 1999). The

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<sup>102</sup> See <http://www.ustboniface.mb.ca/document.doc?id=216> (consulted 11/11/12).

longer guide (Becquer et al. 1999), however, does discuss some of the objections to feminisation mentioned in the previous section such as homonymy and even pejoration. It also has a final section on masculinisation (Becquer et al. 1999: 124) covering terms such as midwife ('midwife' is a problematic professional title for men, as highlighted for Italian in Table 35) which will be revisited within this section. As no new information is illustrated by the meagre store of guidelines from the French government, the discussion will now move to Canada.

From Canada, the Ontario government provides an on-line guide with the following comment relevant to the above findings:

*Au singulier, les termes **épiciènes**, dont la forme est identique au féminin et au masculin, sont accompagnés des articles **la** et **le** ou **un** et **une**.*<sup>103</sup>

[In the singular, variably-gendered terms whose form is identical in masculine and feminine are accompanied by the appropriately gendered determiners.]

The Saint-Boniface University guide has a very similar suggestion, but neither guide discusses the issue of feminising nouns which are not variably-gendered. However, the following section from the Ontario guide is telling, and will be quoted in full:

***Les sages-femmes en cravate*** [Midwives in suits]

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<sup>103</sup> See <http://www.ofa.gov.on.ca/fr/questions-ajustetitre.html> (consulted 11<sup>th</sup> November 2012).

*L'accès des hommes à la profession de sage-femme en France a exigé la création d'un nouveau titre, à cause de la résistance envers l'équivalent masculin sage-homme. En 1980, l'Académie française recommande le terme maïeuticien, dont Le Petit Robert donne cette définition en 2003: «Homme qui exerce la profession de sage-femme». Voici les conclusions qu'on peut en tirer...*

[The entry of men into the midwifery profession in France required the creation of a new term, because of resistance towards the masculine equivalent, 'wise man'. In 1980, the *Académie Française* recommended the term *maïeuticien*, for which the Petit Robert dictionary gave this definition in 2003: "man who exercises the profession of midwife". Here are the conclusions we can draw...]

*Comme l'ont fait les femmes, les hommes ont ressenti le besoin d'utiliser un terme qui les désigne lorsqu'ils exercent un métier traditionnellement féminin.*

[As with women, men felt the need to use a term that distinguished them when entering a traditionally female profession.]

*L'aspect savant de maïeuticien donne à la profession un prestige certain, à cause de son manque de transparence.*

[The intellectual sound of *maïeuticien* gives the profession prestige, because of its obscurity]

*Maïeuticien s'emploie seulement pour les hommes, son caractère prestigieux s'applique donc au titre masculin de la profession. Les sages-femmes, elles, demeurent des sages-femmes.*

[*maïeuticien* is used only for men, its prestigious character therefore applies to men in the profession. As to the midwives, they're still midwives.]

*Enfin, il convient de mentionner que, en 2005, les milieux de la santé (et les mamans) utilisent **sage-homme**, au Canada comme en Europe, et même en Afrique francophone.*

[Finally, it is worth noting that in 2005, the health profession (and mothers) use 'wise man', in Canada and in Europe, and even in francophone Africa.]

This mirrors the previously noted issue (see Table 35) of naming male midwives in Italian (Marcato & Thune 2001) and highlights two important facts related to the feminisation debate: firstly, that men entering predominantly female professions desire their own agentive and, secondly, though intimately related, that agentives applied only to women have lower status than agentives applicable to men.

In the appendix to the Ontario guide, describing how to feminise existing terms, the following comment is made (emphasis in original):

***Maire** et **mairesse** coexistent dans l'usage. Le mot **maître** est féminin dans **maître de langue** et **maître X, avocate**. La forme **maîtresse** se retrouve dans **contremaîtresse** et **maîtresse de poste**, bien qu'on emploie également **maître de poste**. On considère **chef** comme épïcène (**la chef**).*

[**Mayor** and **Mayoress** coexist in current usage. The word *master* is feminine in **master of language** and master **X, barrister**. The form *mistress* is found in **overseer** (f) and **postmistress**, though one can equally use **postmaster**. *Chef* is considered variably-gendered (the (f) chef).]

Some of the items below could be considered 'Canadianisms':

**Terminaison en -n** [terminating in -n]

*Au féminin, la finale est **e** ou **ne**. Les termes **artisane, écrivaine, aide-mécanicienne** en constituent quelques exemples.*  
[the feminine form of has 'e' or 'ne'. The terms **artisan, writer, mechanic** are a few examples.]

*On considère mannequin, marin, médecin et témoin comme épiciens (une mannequin, une marin, une médecin et une témoin). [mannequin, seaman, medic and witness are considered epicene (female determiner used).]*

A distinction is being drawn here between two groups of words whose form appears identical but one group is feminised and the other considered variably-gendered. No grounds for this distinction are given in the guidelines, and for this selection of words there seems no common element, related to prestige or a traditionally male workforce, to explain it.

The contents of this latter set of recommendations will now be considered in the context of so-called *bon usage* and the status of the Canadian variety of French both in Canada and France.

### **6.3.2.2. Bon Usage and the concept of ‘Canadianisms’**

At this point, having noted the controversy feminisation causes in French, some historical perspective is required to clarify the modern issues and the respective positions of their solutions’ proponents. Firstly, the concept of *le bon usage* [‘good practice’] will be explored via commentaries on its application to grammatical feminisation and then how this concept has implicitly been applied throughout the Francophone community.

The idea of *le bon usage* began in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century with Vaugelas ([1647] 1970) *Remarques sur la langue française*. Bullock (2001) quotes him as follows (704):

*... que le genre masculin, étant le plus noble, il doit prédominer toutes les fois que le masculin et le féminin se trouvent ensemble*

[that the masculine gender, being the more noble, should predominate whenever the masculine and feminine are found together] (Vaugelas [1647] 1970:163)

and Fleischman (1997), citing Ayres-Bennett (1987) notes that Vaugelas' *Remarques* were fundamental during the export of the French language to its colonies and have served to create 'a virtual straitjacket' (Fleischman 1997:841) around the French language, creating insecurity amongst its speakers and a particular reliance on the dictionary (see also Yaguello 1989) for corroboration of one's vocabulary.

The linguistic traditions of France – its resistance, for example, to the promotion of regional languages and varieties, the French language being explicitly mentioned in the country's constitution<sup>104</sup> - reinforces the linguistic *status quo* and strengthens the *Académie Française*'s influence over what is written and, indeed, spoken within France: to be a good French citizen one must speak 'good' French, and the guardians of such are the *Académiciens*.

Moving on from France to Canada, Saint-Yves (2006) notes that Nineteenth Century Canadians took France as their language authority when linguistic doubts began to surface following the adoption of English terms into their vocabulary. In recent times, commentators (e.g. Matthey 2000) have suggested feminisation is more widely promoted in Canada, Belgium and Switzerland because of their close contact with languages (both English and Germanic) that

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<sup>104</sup> Refer to the EU 'Support for Minority Languages in Europe' final report at [http://ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/eu-policy-to-protect-and-promote-regional-and-minority-languages-support-report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/languages/documents/eu-policy-to-protect-and-promote-regional-and-minority-languages-support-report_en.pdf), p. 182, consulted 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, which shows France to be towards the bottom when comparing support for regional languages within the EU. See also the French constitutional debate surrounding ratification of the EU directive on regional languages, in 1999, and whether this required a change to the French constitution: <http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/les-decisions/1999/99-412-dc/decision-n-99-412-dc-du-15-juin-1999.11825.html> (consulted 1st September, 2013).

allow freer rein to feminisation – or to the concept of the variable-gender – than does French. However, the corpus data suggests that there are still feminisation issues in Canada related to *le bon usage*, as illustrated by the prescriptively conformant language of the University of Ottawa when referring to their female chancellor in press releases (c.f. Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1.1 for references to *Huguette Labelle*) or the use of the masculine determiner with the obviously female referent of ‘classical soprano’. It is notable that all the corpus instances of determiners mismatched to the sex of female referents (see Chapter 3, tables 6 and 8) in the French language come from Canada, and subsequent searches have only found such occurrences from a single source in France: *Le Figaro*, whose apparent editorial policy on determiners was identified in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.4.1).

Despite the supposed freedom of the Canadian francophone to feminise based on local rules, the corpus data suggests that actual usage in Canada is less advanced than the usage in France (excepting *Le Figaro*) with prescriptive instances of masculine determiners or masculine agentives where a feminisation is available (particularly in the case of *maire*, a dispreferred usage for the majority of guidelines) found more often in Canada than France. This suggests that the legacy of *le bon usage* is more pertinent than the proliferation of non-sexist guidelines, or the proximity of English speakers, to the language of the Canadian media and that the ‘straitjacket’ of prescriptive grammar is just as pertinent, if not more so, for a country with historical qualms about the purity of its language.

Lüdi (1992), while discussing the desire of francophone nations to unite under a single linguistic banner, suggests *québécois* French is a specific variety, in



contrast to the regional varieties of Belgian or Swiss French which conform to the French national 'standard'. In citing only dictionary-based evidence of feminised terms such as *auteure* (Lüdi 1992: 158), however, Lüdi's comments exemplify how language policy can be assumed to reflect language use, without any recourse to naturally occurring data. In reviewing the history of linguistic policy though, he tells us that only '62 lexical Canadianisms' (Lüdi 1992: 163) were recognised officially in 1969 but that modern dictionaries go so far as to identify words as 'Francisms' if they are common in France but not used in Canada. He goes on to note that the Canadian form of French is to be adopted in schools (Lüdi 1992: 164) so perhaps the future does look bright for dictionary-based feminisations if they are being taught to the next generation of speakers.

### **6.3.3. Summary of French language issues**

It would appear that the French language is indeed in a straitjacket, certainly compared to Spanish, on issues of linguistic conformity. In both France and Canada, the strength of the *Académie Française*, underpinned by the idea of *le bon usage*, causes linguistic insecurity as noted by Van Compernelle (2008, 2009) with recourse to dictionaries and spell-checkers hampering the possibility of language change as these resources fail to keep pace with the entry of women into previously all-male areas of public life. Even in Canada, where the dictionaries do contain feminised agentives, their representation in the press, as illustrated by the current study's corpus, varies greatly. As the media is frequently cited as an important agent for linguistic change (see, for example, Pauwels 1998:215) the conservatism exhibited in the French corpus data represents a serious problem for anyone seeking the implementation of non-sexist language.

In the next and final chapter, after summarising the findings illustrated by the study's corpus data, future research topics related to implementing non-sexist language will be suggested in the context of analysing natural language in place of dictionary developments.

## 7. Chapter 7. Conclusions

*Évidemment, ce qui simplifierait tout, ça serait de pouvoir féminiser tous les noms d'agent et d'oser utiliser la capitaine. Il faudra, sans doute, attendre le vingt et unième siècle.*

[Evidently, what would simplify everything would be the ability to feminise all agentives and dare to use 'the(f) captain (f)'. Undoubtedly, we'll have to wait until the 21<sup>st</sup> century for that]

Yaguello (1987), cited in Gervais, (1993:138).

The preceding chapters have presented and discussed a dynamically created corpus of agentives in media references to named women, in the French and Spanish language press, across the old and new worlds. In this final chapter, a summary will be given of the main issues that have arisen and then suggestions will be made for future areas of research into language change, in grammatically gendered contexts, as women increasingly enter into roles traditionally considered 'masculine'.

The initial purpose of this study related to the specific aim, cited in guidelines to 'non-sexist' writing, to promote the visibility of women as agents, via feminised vocabulary and feminine grammatical agreement. As described in Chapter 2, many previous studies of grammatical feminisation have been based on prescriptive dictionaries and serve principally as a critique of lexicography. Where the language of the press, or other public documents, has been analysed, this has rarely involved quantitative methods and, even when quantitative analysis has been available, such studies have usually taken a fixed word-list, often of items whose feminisations are considered controversial or region-specific, as their starting point and collected data (sometimes manually) for a fairly short period of time, resulting in a relatively small corpus.

This project therefore aimed to capture references to men and women in an automated process, firstly so that the agentives used could be directly compared, with no dictionary-based mediation and secondly so that a larger selection of agentives would be available for detailed analysis than was possible in manually-collated or fixed-list studies.

It was also important to undertake cross-language, and cross-country, research as very little comparative work has been done in the area of grammatical feminisation. Not only are there very few studies which compare two languages, but those which do so tend to be comparing a grammatically gendered language (e.g. Spanish) with an apparently non-gendered language (e.g. English) with some inherent assumptions about grammatical gender being inevitable to such an approach. It was also clear that cross-country comparisons of the feminisation situation for a single language (e.g. French) are equally scarce and, as was shown in Chapter 2, the few which do so suffer from comparability issues within their data collection (for example: collecting from differing time periods, or without careful attention to the comparative political outlook of the media publications used across nations) rendering the results unreliable.

In this context, the current study had two related aims: to consider word forms in the light of what could be classed as their 'underlying' gender: that is, the grammatical gender taken by the vast majority (over 90%) of words having the same phonetic or graphical termination. This served to assign a 'gender strength' to each of the base agentives collated into the corpus, with both the quantitative and qualitative analyses then being driven by the contents of the corpus itself. In contrast to previous studies, the decision to create the corpus

dynamically, instead of pre-selecting particular agentives and their word forms, served to highlight issues of role-prestige that could otherwise have been considered artefacts of the initial selection of lexical filters. This decision was prompted primarily by earlier discussions of feminising the French word for 'minister', as commentators had stated that the form of this word could allow it to be considered of variable-gender (e.g. Rey-Debove 1998)

Secondly, the intention was to compare similarly-structured, grammatically gendered languages both against each other (in this case, French and Spanish) and across countries with a common heritage language (Argentina/Spain and France/Canada). To this end, the press in these four countries was monitored for references to named women and men, so that the agentives used for male and female referents could be extracted to a bespoke corpus for analysis. The electronic methods used to collate the corpus allowed for a larger amount and variety of data to be collected than was available in previous press-based studies, of the type discussed in Chapter 2.

Since a data-driven approach was critical to the objectivity of the study, the initial findings were key to the direction of the subsequent analysis. These can be summarised as follows:

- French retains the prescriptive grammatical rule that determiners should agree with the *gender* of the associated noun, even if the referent's sex is different. Spanish, in contrast, always allows the gender of the determiner to agree with the sex of the referent in the case of animate nouns.
- Military positions, and those with political power, show the greatest number of issues with feminisation, across the languages and regions.

- The retrieval of multiple lexemes for the same agentive, in both languages and across the continents, shows that language change to accommodate female referents is actively in progress but that a consensus on feminisation strategies has not yet been reached.
- Regional variation is visible in both languages, though the corpus has not shown the Canadian press to be generally more progressive in issues of non-sexist language, as has been suggested when discussing Quebec elsewhere in the literature<sup>105</sup>
- Conservative editorial policies are apparent for some organisations, showing strict adherence to prescriptive grammatical rules. These were more noticeable in French than in Spanish.

In order to deal objectively with the feminisation anomalies encountered, words were classified into 'strongly feminine', 'strongly masculine' or neither, based on their graphical or phonetic ending as suggested by research in the area L2 teaching (using Lyster (2006) for French; Bergen (1978) and Teschner (1983) for Spanish). This allowed the issue of prestige to be highlighted, as in some contexts only the prestige example(s) of a word form exhibited problems with feminisation while others of the same form could either be feminised easily or considered of variable-gender. This finding, in particular, questioned whether *grammatical* gender itself was really at issue, or whether feminisation was instead a sociolinguistic concern.

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<sup>105</sup> See, for example, Matthey (2000) citing French Canadian universities as progressive in this respect.

Having identified that the 'rules' of grammar, in a prescriptive sense, seemed to have arbitrary application to the discussion of agentive feminisation, further investigation was necessary to elaborate the opposing arguments related to linguistic sexism. On the one side, this is easily exemplified by reading guidelines to non-sexist writing, many of which were discussed in Chapter 6. On the other side, for French and Spanish, the main proponents of the *status quo* are the respective language academies and their members.

The comparison of the positions between the national language academies and proponents of non-sexist language identified two main issues, neither of which is uppermost in the public debate between the two factions:

- The grammatical gender of a word is usually considered to be that printed in a dictionary. Although both Spanish and French allow for 'common' gendered words, where the determiners would follow the sex of animate referents and no morphological feminisation should be necessary, if the dictionary says the word is 'masculine' then spell-checkers and other dictionary-referential processes will conform to this view. Writers who are attempting to follow non-sexist guidelines may therefore be dissuaded from this course by their word-processing software.
- Morphological feminisations, whilst often recommended for adding 'visibility' to women, are at serious risk of creating parallel, not identical, roles<sup>106</sup>.  
Tellingly, it is positions of power that are subject to the most problematic feminisations, with governmental and military titles exhibiting morphological

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<sup>106</sup> See Romaine (1999:94) for a discussion of how terms acquire negative connotations when applied to females.

variety and/or fixed masculine gender, even when the word form behaves in a consistent manner with other roles.

Further research into these two issues could be used to inform future guidelines to non-sexist writing and to widen the debate on feminisation, releasing it from the current polarisation between 'correct' and 'incorrect' usage. In particular, studies based on specific word forms could be undertaken, restricting the words in a selection list to one or more (phonetic or graphical) endings that allow the selection of agentives from a variety of strata within society: the illustrative example from the current study being the pairing of 'student' and 'president', found within the Spanish data. Examples of this type bring to prominence possible historical reasons for similarly-formed agentives being classed as either 'masculine' or 'variably-gendered'.

It should be noted that, although no feminisations of military titles were discovered at in the time period used for data collection in this study, subsequent examples have been cited (see, for example, footnote 93 on page 178) which suggest that a diachronic study of agentives, covering a period as short as the last five years, may productively yield examples of military agentive feminisations. This could usefully chart how the perception of women's roles within the armed forces has been developing in the country from which the data were taken. Sociolinguistic research on military language, of the type undertaken by Capuz and Gonzáles (2002) and cited in Chapter 5 (Section 5.2.2) could also be used to inform such studies.

Language is constantly changing, and change in any aspect of our public life will always be problematic for one social group or another. The current study has shown that, in many areas, the progression of women into non-traditional



roles has created linguistic variation, confusion, duplication – and reaction. Only in the future will it be possible to see which of the available options for naming women presidents, chancellors, judges or military officers has won out, linguistically and regionally, within grammatically gendered languages.

However, with the rise of the internet and the consequent availability of real language for sampling and corpus creation, researchers can start to examine language 'in use' and leave behind examples of language 'in dictionaries': these will always lag behind social convention simply because the convention must be visible before the dictionary compilers can capture it for their latest edition, leaving aside any possible linguistic conservatism on the compiler's part. It is hoped that this study has clearly illustrated the advantages of automated data collection, and a great deal of credit is due to the teams who have developed tools, such as *Glossanet* and *Webcorp*, which allow researchers to build sophisticated web filters and queries, based on linguistic criteria.

The present study has concentrated on media language, as the media is perceived as influential in the spread of new ideas and new vocabulary<sup>107</sup>. However, rich resources exist on the internet that will allow the study of individual language use – for example, research using social media would be able to collect data on how women name themselves when entering non-traditional roles. In the context of agentives, particularly with regard to job titles, the professional networking site *LinkedIn* would be of use to researchers as it allows access to how men and women are naming themselves, and even contains parallel profiles for the same person in different languages.

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<sup>107</sup> See, for example, Cameron (1995:132) where newspaper editors are referred to as 'gatekeepers' of language and Pauwels (1998:26) quoting Tuchman (1978).

Further research is also needed on attitudes to feminised agentives – for example, does the average Argentinean feel that a *presidenta* and a *presidente* fulfil identical roles? Although research has been undertaken on attitudes to neologistic feminisations, by van Compernelle, for example (2008, 2009) there does not appear to be any research into semantic aspects of feminisation – that is, whether the public really do feel the same role is being fulfilled via a feminised agentive as for the base masculine version. It is important to understand the effect of new vocabulary on its audience since, as many commentators have stressed<sup>108</sup>, imposing non-sexist language without explaining the need for it may actually trigger resistance to change.

Feminisation guidelines will continue to attract criticism from linguistically conservative organisations and individuals, though there are other non-sexist language recommendations that cause much more heated debate: primary amongst these is the issue of inclusivity in 'non-marked' masculine plurals. Recent psycholinguistic research<sup>109</sup> has shown that gender stereotypes persist and that generic masculine plurals, despite increasing numbers of women in traditionally male roles, trigger images of men in the reader/listener. It would be possible to research if, and how, strategies for inclusive pluralisation are being taken up in the press using similar techniques to the current study, thus allowing access to a much greater amount and variety of written data than has been

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<sup>108</sup> See, for example, Pauwels who states that feminist language planners felt imposition without explanation would be 'ineffectual, if not counterproductive' (1998:143-144).

<sup>109</sup> See, for example, Gygax et al. (2012).

available in earlier studies which used manual data collection<sup>110</sup> or fixed word lists<sup>111</sup> for their research.

The study described in this thesis has shown that corpus linguistics, and particularly the creation of bespoke corpora using the internet as a resource, can be used to monitor languages during the process of change. It has also drawn on research aimed at L2 teachers to explore grammatical gender at the word form, not the isolated agentive, level. Concrete examples, showing that lexical feminisation is constrained more by society than by grammatical rules, should now serve to objectify a debate that has had considerable emotional content over the years: from those who feel that language change is a bad thing in itself, and from those so eager for women's visibility to be grammaticalised that they see neither the risks of pejoration nor the advantages of the variable-gender.

Research of the type illustrated here could, in the future, prove invaluable in the drafting of guidelines for non-sexist language within grammatically gendered languages.

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<sup>110</sup> For example, Bengoechea (2006a).

<sup>111</sup> For example, both Dister (2004); and Fujimura (2005) apply fixed word-lists to a corpus: the former lists professions and the latter given names.

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